WILD FLOWERS

OF WISCONSIN.

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Wild Flowers

OF

WISCONSIN.

POEMS

BY

B. I. DORWARD,

Cor. Member of The State Historical Society.

EDITED BY HIS SON.

PUBLISHED BY
CATHOLIC NEWS COMPANY, MILWAUKEE.
1872.

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TO

THE RT. REV. JOHN MARTIN HENNI, D.D.,

FIRST BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE,

THIS VOLUME,

AS A TEMPORAL EVIDENCE OF ETERNAL GRATITUDE,

IS

DEDICATED

BY HIS

MOST OB'T SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ST. MARY'S OF THE PINES,

1ST MAY, 1872.

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PREFACE.

Many of the following poems have already appeared in magazines and newspapers; and to those living who were in Milwaukee fifteen years ago, some of them may seem like old acquaintances; but the longest piece, and several others, have not been published before. They are placed nearly in the order of composition.

In the midst of so many and such vast enterprises, both public and private, which are prosecuted in our vigorous young State, it will be well that the field of Poetry also be not left uncultivated. Our real prosperity will depend greatly on the excellence of our literature; and though the old saying, "All good things come from the East," may be partly true yet the flowers that grow around our doors may possess some beauty, and the wheat from our own fields may sustain life, and being near us, should be the more interesting to us.

That this, the first volume of poems, so far as I know, which Wisconsin has produced, may prove to be an abiding contribution to the literature of the State, is the hope of

THE EDITOR.

OPINIONS.

"Some one who writes under the detestable signature of PORTE CRAYON, has occasionally a poem of exquisite beauty in the Milwaukee Sentinel. He is the poet of the State. Can we and other admirers be aecommodated with the name of the poet?"—*Madison Argus.*

"This writer has certainly a very rare felicity of expression, an exquisite delicacy of thought at times; sometimes obscure, and often negligent and harsh, there is a vein of true poetry in him which he should diligently work."—*Madison Journal.*

"The freshness and power of this writer are evident in all that proceeds from him."—*St. Louis Leader.*

"There is no truer poet than DORWARD, the PORTE CRAYON of the Milwaukee papers. His thoughts are always masculine, and I know of no living writer who unites more of the Byronic intensity of expression with mages as old as heaven and earth."—*Cor. N. Y Herald.*

EARTH.

[SPRING.]

Bride of the Sun! vast, teeming, lovely Earth!
Thou that, in high obedience to thy lord,
Like a true woman, yields with such a grace
Thy many-wombèd lap—we bid thee hail!
We bid thee hail on this thy bridal morn,
Renewed from year to year, and age to age,
Thro' countless time! Thou mother of us all!
Like fruitful matron, generous and rich,
No grudgings ever come to thy large heart
Of stinted food for thy unnumbered children!
Thy bounteous breast hath milk enough for more
Than ever yet have breathed thy fragrant air.
The modern growth of cold, rebellious thought,
Unwomanly, unmânly, and inhuman,
That wills the purchase of untimely death,
For ease and shallow pleasures, is not thine—
So much thou lovèst life, and growth, and beauty.
Even now the Spring is stirring thro' thy veins,
Tho' snow is on thy face; the very buds
Are folded into cones, as if to cleave
Their way to heaven, like childhood's attitude
In prayer; and the pale snowdrop, leaving
All its winter gloom of doubt and darkness,

Adds to our faith that God the Father liveth.
O! lovely Earth! the Poet is like thee:
The precious seed of thought which he receives
From heaven, in moonless, starless nights of pain,
And poverty, and sorrow, he yields back
To light, clothed in the melody of human speech!

TWILIGHT.

[ON THE MILWAUKEE.]

The sun in glory hath gone down,
And all the clouds that round him played,
Are melting into deepest shade—
A monarch and his courtiers flown.

Now, in this wicker-work canoe,
Of birchen bark, by red man made,
I, having crossed myself and prayed,
My homeward journey may pursue.

O, blessèd streak of northern light,
That rests upon this silent stream,
With such a soft and holy gleam,
Half way between the dark and bright!

The bold, steep banks are filled with gloom;
And in the gloom the fire-fly plays,
And lightens up its twilight days,
As we with bright thoughts near the tomb.

The shadows by the water's edge
  Are moveless, as the tall dark trees
  That make them; not the slightest breeze
Is stirring reed, nor rush, nor sedge.

The waterlily, pure and mild,
  Is closed among its circled leaves;
  And as the mother's bosom heaves,
So sways and sleeps the dreamy child.

The fragrance of the wilding rose
  Breathes sweetly from the hidden banks,
  Like one who gives, nor cares for thanks,
But does his good when no one knows.

All things are full of thought and quiet,
  From weed and tree, to sky and star;
  They lift my heart and soul afar
From city dust, and din, and riot.

And one by one the stars peep through,
  To see their faces in the river,
  As they've been doing now forever,
And evermore are like to do.

But yonder is the star I love!
  The light from my own window gleaming,
  Where prattling voices, bright eyes beaming,
More than the stars of heaven my soul doth move!

LOVE.

Death stole the color from thy cheek,
The lustre from thy azure eye—
Thy little words he stole away,
And wasted thee to pale and weak.
Perhaps he did all this to try
If we would wish thee *still* to stay.

Love sinketh not with sunken eyes—
Love paleth not with pallid lips—
Love grows not dumb with tuneless tongue,
Nor yet from waste and weakness flies;
And so, to light this dull eclipse,
A stronger love has only sprung.

He took thy breath and scattered it
Upon the thankless, greedy air;
His wintry fingers touched thy veins—
He touched not thee! Oh! no! nor yet
Our love, that makes thee still more fair,
And after time and death remains.

DEBTORS.

The winds are debtors to the flowers
For fragrance given;
The trees are debtors to the showers
That fall from heaven.

The fruits are debtors to the sun
For ripening beams;
The springs are debtors to the clouds,
To springs, the streams.

The earth is debtor to the moon,
For love's own light;
The lone barque to the polar star,
For guidance right.

And I am debtor to thine eyes,
So dark, so bright!
Ah! let this heart unto thy heart
Own it to-night!

Hang like ripe fruit upon my neck.
Thou sweetest weight!
And let me press thy vermeil lips,
The door of fate!

And let me hold thy small soft fingers,
Perfection's art—
What's this! the blood within them lingers,
In doubt which heart

It ought to flow to! how is this?
Ah! now I see!
Let us explain it with a kiss—
Both debtors we!

INDIAN SUMMER.

The forest is on fire! the nightly frosts,
The stealthy vanguard of grim winter's power,
Have turned the ash and beechen green to gold,
And lit the maple leaves with crimson flame;
And through their boughs, like ashes from a grate,
The leaves are falling. Ah! the falling leaves!

The dark green oak alone, like hopeful heart,
Carries his fresh youth into wintry age,
And views the dwindling pathway of the sun,
Unmoved, while weaker ones around grow pale;
Yet through his boughs, like tears from hero's eyes,
Some leaves are falling. Ah! the falling leaves!

The smoky air hangs on the earth like bloom
Upon a citron; or, as if some vast
And busy Indian camping ground were near;
But while I write, a boy with flaxen curls,
Brings me some arrow-heads of flint, he's found,
Which seem to say, too, "Ah! the falling leaves!"

How many withered hopes, from human hearts,
Lie like seared leaves, along the vaults of death!
And, sadder yet, how many hearts grown cold,
That still do live without the fire of love!
Decay and death make harvest all the year,
And make us sigh still, "Ah! the falling leaves!"

SUNSET.

The day is dying! and across my path
Streameth the golden lightnings of the sun,
Bathing the hill-tops with his latest beams,
Brightening the spires that point from earth to heaven!
So the good man, when on his death-bed laid,
Forgetful of the pleasant vales of life,
Where he had pitched his dwelling of a night,
And mindful only of his highest thought—
The azure future, undisturbed and pure—
Casts his tired soul, so weary of unrest,
Upon the mountains of eternity!

And yonder loveful gathering of clouds,
Like friends drawn round the bright but sinking soul,
Take all the attitudes of hope and woe!
One fragile thing, with the intensity
Of hopeless grief, scatters her glittering hair
Along the sky and dies! like the Hindoo,
Refusing to live longer than her lord.
Another figure kneeleth, with bowed heart,
But bright, uplifted forehead—star-eyed hope
Whispers to him, "A day is naught to Time,
And Time is nothing to Eternity;
The parted meet again." Then, overpowered
By watching o'er his friend, sinks on the dusky rim
Of the horizon; and, while yet I linger,
Sun, clouds, and all have vanished from my sight,
And twilight's silent loom is weaving day with night.

THE MOTHER.

The *sweetest* baby that was ever seen!
Now, see! was ever anything like thee,
Thou little, restless, nestling, laughing sprite?
What dost thou want of me? What dost thou mean
With all that wild abandon? In thy glee,
I cannot hold thee. What now! wilt thou bite?

The dearest cherub! does he want his milk?
Ah! these are papa's eyes when he was wooing;
As full of love as are the summer skies,
That never seem to dream of storms a brewing;
And thy dear hair is soft as yellow silk;
And on thy dewy lips, what heavenly dyes!

Thy cheek is softer than a beechen leaf
New opened; and thy breath is healing balm—
Did mother squeeze her little bird too hard?
Now he shall have it all to heal his grief;
Then say, "please, ma'am," for this! "A pedee mam."
Bless thee, my darling! Heaven be thy guard!

I would that thou couldst milk me till I die!
For earth has nothing finer than thy brow,
Which, like a heap of lilies near my heart,
I fain would water till its well be dry!
O, wingless angel! thou art sleepy now;
And sleep is like to death, and makes me start.

Hush! o'er the azure windows of his soul
Fall the rich hangings; yet his lips still move
As from the fountains of my love he drew
The life that feeds his life—away control!
I cannot help it, I will weep for love:
He is the flower—and *I* shall be the dew.

HOPELESS LOVE.

A captive, gazing at the azure sky,
Through the small square formed by his dungeon grate,
Watching to see the bird he loves fly o'er,
Portrays my fate.

A man with blackened lips, and parching tongue,
Who sees, beyond his reach, though bubbling nigh,
A spring, with budded violets round the brim—
Like him am I.

A drowning seaman, struggling in the deep,
Who sees a vine-clad island smiling near,
Yet hath no hope of reaching, ere he die—
So I am, here.

Dearer the smile upon thy glowing lip,
Dearer by far, though never meant for me,
Than limpid spring to thirst; or to the slave
Sweet liberty.

My heart, like pilgrim to forbidden shrine,
At distance worships; and fans secretly
Its ever-burning fires for thee in vain—
In vain for thee!

Dark and unknown, as is the bedded pearl,
And Time, the diver, ne'er can bring to view
How much of silent, hidden, hopeless love,
It spends on you.

THE MOURNING DOVE.

"*Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo.*" Thou solitary bird!
That sittest wailing on the pendant boughs
Of the beech forest, thinking sorrow's note
Sweeter by far than all the songs of joy
That ever poured from ravished warbler's throat.
Say! hath thy life, like man's, the dull alloy
Of fading friendships, and of faithless vows?
Of childhood's lispings, lost as soon as heard?
Tell me in secret, what did fortune do
To make thee wail so? "*Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo.*"

That is thy answer, and means no doubt this:
That thou art no more happy than ourselves.
To give the *why* would puzzle me and thee;
Thou hast a coat for which none toils and weaves;
Thou hast for shelter the o'erspreading tree;
Thou hast the scattered grain from ripened sheaves

Of others' sowing; and we—thankless elves—
Have more a thousand times the grains of bliss
We never sowed—we want them gathered, too—
We cry, "Woe 's me"—thou, "Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo.'

Now I have wronged thee! Not for clothes or food
Could bird or mortal sing a song like thine.
Love—love alone, and sorrow—which is love
Sunk in the well-spring of the heart—can bring
A melody so plaintive; far above,
In its low murmuring grief, the loudest string
That ever made the soul of man divine!
For such a mourner, in this vaulted wood,
Who would not pass death's gloomy portal through,
If thou wouldst teach his love thy "*Coo-aye, coo?*"

FATE.

Brother of Time! twin-born of ancient Night,
By man called destiny, and providence;
Traveler between the dead eternity
And the unborn eternity to come;
Majestic, silent, irresistible!
The sure executive of God thou art;
All bend to thee, or, if they strive against,
Their striving but fulfils thy dread command.
Impelled by thee, the circling planets roll
Their ceaseless song up through the azure vault,
Where crossing streams of radiance mix and light
The vast cathedral of the universe!

Vain to repine at that which cometh not—
Vain to regret the joy that's passed away—
Vain all our prayers to turn thy rushing tide—
If that our prayers were but a part of thee!

FIRST LOVE.

Braided tress of auburn hair!
  Which in secret place I keep,
In a secret place with care,
  With a feeling strange and deep,
With a feeling strange and rare,
  That can neither laugh nor weep,
Like a miser with his heap,
  Now I bring thee to the light;
  Though his treasure shineth bright,
He may still his treasure keep;
    Dearer to my heart is mine,
  Dearer to my soul and sight,
    Far less earthly—more divine!

Braided tress of auburn hair!
  Severed by a bashful hand
From a form I thought so fair,
  In a far, far distant land;
Sent to me—to me alone—
  Nearly twenty years agone,
From the marge of eastern sea,
  On whose hard, wave-furrowed sand,
  Heart in heart, and hand in hand,

Save to love unconscious, we,
Having naught but hope in store,
A live-long day in parting wore,
Now I see, to meet no more.
Dost remember? Thou wert there,
Little nestling lock of hair?

Braided tress of auburn hair!
Many thousand miles with me
Thou hast come, through foul and fair,
Over land and over sea;
Many thoughts are left behind,
Memories that time hath ta'en,
Many feelings hid in dust,
Thou, unaltered, still remain;
Still remainest, and I trust
Will. A voice so low and kind
Whispers to me, "Could you dare
Forget this little lock of hair?

Braided tress of auburn hair!
Thou art young, and rich, and gay.
Are thy mates all dashed with gray,
Silver fruit of pain and care?
O, if thou couldst tell me where
The dear head is where you grew,
If for her the sun and dew
Beads the grass, and glads the air,
If she spends a thought on me,—
I would give thee—kisses three.

Hush! She stands beside me now—
Vision dear, untouched by time!
Like a budding virgin flower,
Dewy lips and rounded brow,
Ever in thy girlhood's prime,
Youth eternal is thy dower.
Let me press thee to my heart;
Let me kiss thee as of yore.
Never, never shall we part,
Time nor death shall part us more.
Yes, I know those eyes of thine—
Ah! She melts into the air,
Leaving me o'er thee to pine,
Priceless lock of auburn hair!

WINTER.

Summer, 'frighted, far hath flown,
O'er the sunny South to play;
Winter mounts his crystal throne—
'Tis creation's holiday!

Weary Earth is gone to sleep
'Neath a sparkling coverlid,
All her beauties buried deep,
All her precious seeds are hid:
And the laughing streams are dumb
Which, like children on her knees,
Prattled to the wild-bee's hum,
To the flowers, and birds, and trees;

Trees that now like spectres stand,
All their twinkling leaves are gone,
Like a terror-stricken band,
Huddled round the mossy stone.

Myriad needle-points of frost
Drift along the tuneless air;
All the wild-wood notes are lost,
Save the snow-birds chirping there.
Nature's week of toil is done;
All is hushed, as if to pray
That once more the kindling sun
Would renew Creation's day!

Graves, like those who sleep below,
Now are shrouded all in white,
Rounded finely with the snow,
Cold and silent, day and night.
From my window I can see
Little foot-prints, leading where
One low mound was heap'd by me—
Half by me, half by despair.
Shadowless, but not forgot,
There the sleeping sister lies.
Every one has some dear spot
Which he sees through misty eyes,
Visiting where, unreceived,
He must stand beside the door,
Then return, again bereaved,
Again to mourn, as heretofore.

If for every shout of mirth
  Stricken hearts somewhere are pining,
Sure for every grave on earth
  Far above a star is shining,
Whispering, "Grief must pass away,
All things have their holiday."

Artist—La Somnambula—
  Frost is doing curious things,
Making, ere the break of day,
  Such fantastic pencilings—
Mountains, foliage and cloud—
  Over all the window-panes.
In the dwellings of the proud
  The cold tracery quickly wanes,
But where fortune frowning falls
In the huts of poverty,
It is slow to melt away.
Ah! the hovels of the poor,
  Where, around the sleeper's bed,
The breath lies frozen, crusting o'er
  The scanty drapery of his bed.
Bring, ye idle pictures, bring,
Cheering hopes of coming Spring;
Keep his heart from perishing.

See! A spirit in the wind,
  Whitening the beards of men,
Leaving limping Time behind
  With his threescore years and ten;

Care and canker, toil and tears,
Time requires to turn us grey,
Frost can crowd so many years
All into a winter day.

FLOWERS.

Yes, flowers are beautiful. The queenly rose,
The pink, the lily, and the violet,
And all the blooms that, numberless, adorn
This wife of heaven, as jewels do a bride.
Yet, if they only tell me of themselves—
How they do separate the pregnant light,
And each take color suited to its form,
As tasteful woman chooseth her attire,
How they in many-sided beauty shame
The labored *one* view of the artist, Man,
Or their carousals among dewy wine,
Of silent loves where bees and winds are priests;
Or how they load the air with fragrant health,
As doth the Arab his swift desert ship
That carries myrrh, and spice, and cinnamon—
If they but tell me this, and nothing more,
They are but gilding on an unknown book,
They are but pearls upon virgin's brow,
Whose eyes, and lips, and brow, we ne'er have seen.

The moon, whose eye of love shines on our rest—
The stars that sphere themselves in drops of dew—

The sun himself, in his sublimity—
Were tinsel only, serving but to mar,
And stain the far off blue eternity,
But for the still small voice that speaks through all,
"I came not hither of myself, but am
Sustained by Him who all indeed sustains;
Whate'er of bright or beautiful thou seest,
More bright, more beautiful, remains unseen."

EDUCATION.

Curled, blue-eyed mystery!
Why has thy history
Ne'er yet to man been given,
Thou last rich gift of heaven?
Is it because nature,
So rich and so lavish,
Hath many like thee?
Or is it that man is
So gothic and savage,
Having eyes, cannot see?
Oh! nature can never,
Although she tries ever,
Like thee make another,
For a son or a brother!

Three summers and better
The sun's been thy debtor,

For so throwing his light
From thy ringlets so bright,
Much further and better,
Than without thee he might.
Yet he does own the debt,
When thy blue eyes are wet,
When from those wells of light,
Dimming thy own dear sight,
The crystal tear trickles—
Ah! then he ne'er stickles,
But trembling on each drop,
His star signet is set!
Then, to make peace with thee,
See how he treats with thee!
Giving to thee that citron
For a round stool to sit on;
Or to poise 'tween thy shoulders—
While the captive beholders,
Held fast by thy childish joy—
See Atlas once more a boy!

Thou art all Nature's now!
Art hath no part in thee;
Care hath not plowed thy brow,
Nor chilled the fond heart in thee;
Custom's slow-staining breath
Hath not come near to thee;
Penury, sin and death,
Hath not brought fear to thee.

What good can I do thee?
Try to teach and subdue thee?
Ah me! THOU art master,
For surer and faster
That same work you do ME.
Gold I have none to give,
Nor acres to leave thee—
Yet He that bids you live,
Will never bereave thee
Of the sun, morn and even,
Of the wind and the shower;
The clear blue of heaven,
And the blue in the flower;
The smooth lakes that mirror
The pale moon and the star;
The dear brook at thy feet—
The gray mountain afar—
An eternal inheritance,
Beauty's own dower.

For what are you sent here,
With those spirit-eyes to peer?
I scarce dare to kiss thee,
Though thou sayest thou art mine,
With those sweet lips of thine—
Yet my heart must aye bless thee.
For what are you sent here?
For what are you given?
You bind me to earth here,
Yet raise me to heaven.

Like rosy morn, or fresh young spring,
The boy looked up, with lips apart,
Full brow, and eyes that reach the heart;
He seemed to say, "I bring! I bring!
"Lessons of Purity, of Truth, of Love,
"Of freedom, and of Beauty from above;
"An angel's work I do, without his wing!"

EVENING.

Purple, and crimson, and gold,
Fainting and fading away,
Calm, yet in haste, like a beautiful dream,
Or a swan on the stream,
The bright glories of day,
Ere the beauty is penciled or told,
Sinks into gray,
Fainting and fading in twilight away.

Linger! O, cease not to shine!
Leave me the light of her eyes!
Stay, till I gaze on her beautiful cheek,
And her forehead so meek,
And her lips, where love lies,
And the passion of pity divine!
Vain are my sighs—
Loveliness fades into twilight, and dies.

TO MY MOTHER.

As bends the lily to the earth
From which to light and life it sprung,
So I will bend with faltering tongue,
And speak of her who gave me birth;
And, as the dewdrops from the flower
Are scattered by the morning breeze,
So—what are left—I scatter these
Poor drops, when touched by memory's power.
Ah! mother mine! though now no more,
My words, perchance, can reach thine ear,
Or pierce to that all-radiant sphere
Where mortals lose the days of yore,
So full and round is present bliss;
Yet I will write these lines to thee,
Late and unworthy though they be,
And soothe my saddened soul in this.
So much of fervent love unpaid—
The fitting time to pay it lost,
So much of toil, and care, and cost
I see, since thou wert lowly laid,
That, thinking of the time that's dead,
I seem to see thine image rise
And cast on me those thoughtful eyes,
I seem to hear what thou hast said.
Whitened by threescore years and ten,
That little lock of silver hair
Hangs o'er a forehead pale with care,
Which here I ne'er shall kiss again;

But while for me the flowers bloom,
And scatter leaves on Mother Earth,
I'll not forget thy patient worth,
Which God hath placed beyond the tomb.

THE "FOURTH."

This is the "Fourth"!
Hear it, ye tyrant hearts, where'er ye be!
Hear it, ye struggling millions, not yet free!
From South to North!
Hear it, from rugged Maine to that bright strand
Whose rivers wander over golden sand;
Hear it, ye jeweled crowns, this is the "Fonrth!"

Hark to the boom
Of iron-throated thunder, and the shout
Of thankful millions to the sky pealed out!
As if the tomb
That holds oppression, buried fathom deep,
Could never rise again to make man weep,
Or wrap our fertile land in fire and gloom.

Peace to the brave;
Peace to the wise, who won this heritage;
Glory to those who keep, from age to age,
From wave to wave,
Unbroken, this great birth-gift of young time.
Harbor for suffering souls from every clime,
Oh favored land! May God thee shield and save!

TO THE COMET.

(OF 1853.)

What ship ahoy? From what point dost thou hail,
And whither art thou bound, thou gallant barque?
Plowing, with burnished prow and shining wake,
The vast and margeless ocean of the air?
What is thy cargo? Hast thou slaves aboard,
Sent hither for their sins, anchored with chains,
All dark and grim, beneath thy golden hatches,
And whirled alternately from lurid fire
To the pale regions of eternal ice?
Or art thou laden with the spirits blest,
Who, as they pass each dazzling orb, send forth
Hymns full of wonder to the listening spheres?
Bringest thou the deadly pestilence, to strike
The wicked with a curse, or fill with joy
And benediction the meek souls who see
In every thing the sweetest providence?
Or bring'st thou red-eyed war, or famine gaunt,
To whip the selfish world, and show vain man
The finest palace is a Jonah's gourd?
Courier of God! Mysterious messenger!
That, through the wilderness of shining worlds
And countless suns, threadest thy wayless way!
Thou hast an answer fit for every one;
Evil to evil minds, and good to good,
As suns that quicken life smite too with death.
The consience-stricken, fevered, dying wretch
Sees but a fury in thy flaming hair,

By demons sent, to scourge him into night.
The shallow brain in thy eccentric haste
Sees a fine type of progress, and affirms
To-morrow will be wiser than to-day.
Another sees in thee the power of Him
Who sent thee on thy errand—and alone
Doth know its import—he believes that all
Man sees or hears, from pipe of morning bird
To thy strange wandering fire, is but one web
That none may break from, that a meaning dwells
In every sigh of heaven that reaches earth,
And he is favored who can read aright.

Lower and lower, like a meteor stone,
Down through the yellow twilight—thou art gone.

I'LL WEEP NO MORE.

The fount that holds my tears is dry,
I'll weep no more! I'll weep no more!
Time was not given to mourn and sigh,
And count our sorrows o'er and o'er.

I 'll laugh and sing my songs of joy;
I 'll plant, and build, and keep me gay;
Nor let the past, with cold alloy,
Intrude upon the glad to-day.

So thought I, and towards the sky—
The blue, eternal sky—I turned;
But there the color of her eye
I found, and straight my grief returned.

Down dropped my gaze the earth to seek,
Where, at my feet, a rose had blown,
And there, the color of her cheek—
Leaving her pale—had hither flown.

I turned aside; the autumn leaves
Were whirled in clusters through the air,
Then, falling meekly 'neath the eaves
They rested, like her golden hair.

So, though I neither weep nor sigh,
Mine eyes cannot refuse to see,
The broken fragments round me lie
Of one who was so dear to me.

BY THE RIVULET.

(I.)

Sweet Mary by the rivulet
Sat smiling, weaving buds and flowers,
A garland for her locks of jet,
Unmindful of the passing hours.

The water, murmuring like love,
Stole round and kissed her naked feet;
And, half bewitched, it stayed and strove
To end its course near one so sweet.

And so it lingered there a while,
And to a circling pool it grew,
That it might large enough become
To make one beauty into two.

And so, by all that's good and fair,
I stopped, like it, that in my soul
I might enclose the vision rare—
My heart I scarcely could control.

Her brow was full, and smooth, and low,
Her eyes were two strange wells of light;
Her parted lips were in a glow
Of health; her lovely throat was white.

And all around, her clustering hair,
Like night tost from the brow of morn,
Lay heaped upon her shoulders bare.
Was ever fairer creature born?

"My arm is strong," I said, "My door
Is covered by the clinging vine;
I love thee more, and more, and more!
Dear maiden, say thou wilt be mine.

Ah! by that peerless name of thine—
  Peerless on earth, peerless in heaven—
Now let us seek the holy man,
  And sure is blessing will be given."

And so we did; and though her cheek
  Has lost its bloom, her hair its jet,
I still shall bless the day I won
  My Mary by the rivulet.

BY THE RIVULET.

(II.)

I sat me down beside the brook,
  Beneath the overhanging trees,
And said, as some wild flowers I took,
  "I'll deck my raven locks with these;

For haply he may come this way;
  Nearer and cooler, too, it is.
Yet, if he speak, what shall I say?
  I hope there is no sin in this."

Just then a timid wood-dove flew
  With noiseless wing, and in a pool
Dipt its fine neck of changing hue—
  Companionless, yet beautiful.

I almost wept to see it so,
  But soon, 'mong twinkling shadows faint,
It rose, and on a stately ash
  Poured forth a low and sweet complaint.

The grape-vine clinging to the tree,
  The song of sorrow from the bird,
The streamlet hastening to the sea,
  Did so with my poor heart accord,

That, ere I heard his step, he stood
  Quite near me—young, and brave, and wise;
He spoke, but sure I understood
  Less from his words than from his eyes.

I saw nor stream nor clasping vine,
  I heard no more the mourning dove;
For I was his and he was mine,
  When heaven should sanctify our love.

And heaven did bless our steadfast love,
  And side by side, in joy and care,
With hand, and head, and heart, we strove
  To work, to learn, to cheer, to bear.

Though sunken now my Edward's eyes,
  They keep a kindly glance for me;
In being found I found a prize
  Beneath that vine, and ashen tree.

We've known the love begot of joy,
  We've known the love of sorrow born,
We know the hope that brighter grows
  As things of time get overworn.

My only wish is, if it please
  The One that made us, that we be
Like apples in the farmer's hand—
  Both ripe at once—dropt from the tree!

IDLENESS.

[SONNET.]

Woe to the soul whose zeal forgets to burn,
  And lies ungirt and idle on the way!
  That is the hour the fiend attacks his prey,
And, if he take not, leaves it stained and torn;
  For passion, with its scorpion-whip of fire,
Shall unimpeded leap along the veins,
Consuming all of virtue that remains,
  Drowning the spirit in confused desire,
Whose smoke ascends and blurs the face of heaven.
  Better to toil like slave beneath the rod,
And sink out-worn to sinless sleep at even,
  Than bear a heart that throbs—and not for God;
For sighs and bitter tears must yet be given
  Before that soul can rise beneath her load.

NATURE.

When hope upon my soul distils
The blessed dew, and I am glad,
The streams, the clouds, the distant hills,
In gold and amethyst are clad:
And from the east a rosy light—
A flush upon the brow of morn—
Springs, tender, soft, and calm, and bright,
As over Eden newly born.

Nature, the mimic of the heart,
Seems grand or mean, or foul or fair,
As Fortune smiles, or teardrops start,
For every habit she can wear.
Whene'er I weep, whene'er I sigh,
An answer comes from dripping clouds,
And hollow winds that moan and die,
And take the withered leaves for shrouds.

When 'pressed with doubts on every side,
She tells me all creation dies;
Points to the oak—the forest's pride,
That low beside the bramble lies,
And whispers, "It can rise no more,
Poor life is but the seed of death;
Upon a sea without a shore
Thou soon may'st yield thy fitful breath."

Away, thou echo of the soul!
Thou changeful mirror of the mind!

Thy stolen treasures round us roll,
And find us blind, and leave us blind.
Away! Our darkness cries for light!
Our bruises ask for healing balm;
Our hopes long for a steadfast height,
Forever bright, forever calm!

THE FARMER.

This year my wheat is poor indeed;
Not much of straw, not much of grain.
To make the little less, it is
All beaten down by wind and rain.

My friend says, reap it carefully,
Choose out the portions that are best;
Take them, and do not waste your time
Nor squander labor on the rest.

Yet, I remember when a gift
From one we love received has been,
Even if its value is not great,
We prize, care for, and keep it clean.

The giver, then, well pleased to see
The gift he gave so valued grown,
Deep in his treasure dips his hand,
For to the thankful more is thrown.

When little graces in the soul
Are left unheeded, waiting still
For some gigantic shining grace,
The heedless soul may wait her fill.

And is not wheat thy gift, O God,
Through which the wondrous blessings flow
Of mortal and immortal food—
Our staves of life while here below?

Then let me glean this scanty field
With care and patience; 'tis from Thee.
Another year Thy hand may pour
A larger harvest upon me.

Alas! I am ashamed that we,
With iron, steam and sciences,
Such mighty means, such dwarfish ends,
Rush forward into nothingness.

We labor more with less content
Than they whose wooden plowshares tilled
The earth; whose cattle trod the grain;
We hunger more, but are not filled.

Give what Thou pleasest, O, my Lord;
Or large, or small, deserving none,
I cannot be a chooser, and
May Thy thrice-blessed Will be done.

IF.

If the rose had an ever-green leaf,
And were perfect—a flower complete
As the one which we form in the mind,
And were all that is best for us sweet;

If the blossoms of spring never fell
By the worm, or the wind, or the blight,
But were rounded to fruit by the power
That began with a promise so bright;

If beauty and virtue forever
Dwelt together, as fancy believes,
And distance and death could not sever
The web which the fond heart still weaves;

If honor and wealth were still found
Attending on wisdom and love,
And patience and merit were crowned
Upon earth, as the saints are above;

If the daylight were never to die,
And light to our darkness were given,
And no tempest could stain the blue sky,
What then? We should ne'er think of Heaven

HEAVEN.

[IN IMITATION OF GOETHE'S "MIGNON."]

Know'st thou the land? There flowers eternal bloom,
And fruits unknown on earth exhale perfume;
Unfading light illumes unfading eyes,
And songs of gladness from all hearts arise.
Say, dost thou know it?
There, with thee,
O my beloved one, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the house? Bright are its pillared halls,
Its floors are pearl: and from its crystal walls
Angels, with radiant pinions, as they see
Thee enter, say, "Saved one, we welcome thee."
Say, dost thou know it?
There, with thee,
O my beloved one, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the mountain crowned with amethyst?
Upon its God-lit sides the weary rest;
There Beauty, Truth and Love immortal reign,
And thy lost Eden is renewed again!
Say, dost thou know it?
O, with thee,
And those my heart loves, would that I could flee!

AUTUMN.

Once more the Autumn, with his chilly dews
And smoky morning mists, for man is born;
O'er thousand fields the ranks of tasseled corn
Stand yellowing in the sun their grain profuse.

Around the cottage porch the trailing vine
Hangs its rich clusters for the purple stain—
Dear gift of heaven—that holds the healing rain
To sprinkle drooping hearts—thrice-blessed wine!

The fitful winds that sway the tree-tops now,
Patter upon the leaves their unctuous store
Of nuts and seeds, till Labor's lap runs o'er,
For Plenty bends to earth the laden bough.

Like lumps of dusty gold the melons lie
Scattered about upon the scented grounds;
And from the lingering blooms a humming sound—
The wild-bee's parting song—comes floating by.

Sweet are the folded, silken buds of Spring;
Sweeter, the unclasped gems of Summer's bowers;
Sweetest by far the long result of hours,
Of sun and dew—the fruits doth Autumn bring.

Sweet is the folded bud, the cradled dove;
Fair is the bright-eyed girl, with soul of truth;
But sweeter, fairer, lovelier, in sooth,
The ripened maiden—richest fruit of Love.

Season of hope fulfilled—the hope of toil,
Ripener of fruit, whose garner is in heaven.
The thankful heart of man—has it, too, thriven,
As well as earthly corn, and wine, and oil?

STANZAS.

[IN IMITATION OF HERBERT.]

Sweet maid, so lovely, young and fair,
An angel to yon stripling's eye,
Thy future lies with wrinkled care,
And thou must die.

Dear child, so careless what betide,
The apple of thy mother's eye,
Thy sunny hair the earth will hide,
For thou must die.

Fair cloud, with golden fringes bright,
That o'er the western verge doth lie,
How swiftly comes the darkling night
That makes thee die.

Gay landscape—hill, and stream, and tree
Lit by the sunny summer sky,
The wintry tempest comes to thee
And makes thee die.

Oh, Lord of Life! Thou, Thou alone,
And those who humbly cling to Thee,
Live—earthly love and beauty gone—
Eternally.

MENONA.

[BOAT SONG.]

O'er the lake the breeze is sweeping,
Bearing, on its fragrant wings,
Joys that set old care asleeping
Down among forgotten things.
Here, upon Menona's bosom,
Ah! what health and hope arise!
Round our prow is sparkling gladness,
In our wake all sadness dies.

From the verdant, shady margin,
Songs of summer birds we hear;
Heaven's blue dome is all above us,
And below, reflected clear.
Sweet is nature's wordless music,
Yet her song is scarce divine;
Why? She is content with water,
Never knew the taste of wine!
Sweet is nature's wordless music,
Sweeter, had she tasted wine!

Rest awhile, and let our boat glide
As she may, on *Fairy Lake;*
Quit the rudder and move forward,
And in moderation take—
Take the blessings Heaven has lent us,
Snatch from toil these halcyon days;

Dear are grateful hearts to heaven,
And to heaven be all the praise!
Dear are grateful hearts to heaven,
And to Heaven be all the praise!

FAITH.

The latest tremblings of the vesper song
Up through the vaulted roof to God had flown,
When forth with noiseless tread a woman stepped;
And, as she passed, she dipped her fingers in
A little pool of water in a stone,
And, bending gently, touched her forehead fair,
Hanging a crystal bead thereon, which looked
Like morning dew-drop on a lily bloom.

Her eyelids drooped, as if she looked within
On her own heart, and found that peace was there;
And her curved lips, scarce parted, with the one
Beneath drawn back in sweet obedience,
Told that the highest feeling led the rest
In chains of mild humility and love.

Never did queenly head with jeweled crown
Look half so fair: so fit for life, so fit
For death, as that meek woman with the star
Of faith upon her unpretending brow.

Place me the heaviest doubt from skeptic brain
Against this tiny, limpid water drop,
And it will be but darkness beside light,
No beside yes, what is not by what is.
Or, bring the record of the highest deed
That ever yet hath been performed by man
Upon the battle-field; or, more obscure,
And only seen from heaven's point of view,
On the unnoticed battle-field of life,
And Faith will claim the treasure as her own.

Strong is the sword that love of freedom wields—
Bear witness every land that keeps a name;
And swift the arm that's moved by earthly love—
Bear witness every heart that ever loved;
But stronger, swifter, more enduring far
The thought that links the spirit to her God.

TO C. G.

Lover of perfectness in fruits and flow'rs!
  Again the nuts drop on the faded leaves,
  Again her frosty mist dim twilight weaves,
And day is shorten'd of her finest hours.

The time has gone when, ere the sun had dried
  From glowing roses morning's tears of love,
  You walked the garden, and around, above,
Saw food and beauty growing side by side.

Like wounded birds the leaves fall fluttering,
That used to kiss each other with chaste breath,
As the wind stirred them; and now yellow death
Sweeps them together with his dusty wing.

The drowsy snake to its long sleep retires,
The grasshoppers are chaunting their last song,
Far to the genial South the wild fowl throng,
And Autumn lights his gold and crimson fires.

Not empty-handed hath he come—good hap—
The fragrant load has broken down the boughs,
Both Spring and Summer have redeemed their vows,
And Plenty, laughing, cannot hold her lap.

Thrice happy is the labor spent on earth!
First, passeth full of hope the willing Spring;
Next, Summer all her gorgeous treasure brings,
And Atuumn rounds them into perfect worth.

So, full of hope, the stripling's heart beats fast;
So, lavish manhood spends his noontide power;
Then age mature sits in his russet bower
And gives us wisdom's fruit—the best and last.

Our hopes are now in the mysterious seed
That, patient, waits the music of the Spring,
When the full-hearted streamlets dance and sing,
From their enchanted wintry bondage freed.

So, still and silent lie the seeds of thought,
Gleanings from heaven, or earth with beauty crown'd.
Ah! may we be at that last harvest found,
Laden with fruits that will not turn to naught.

DAWN.

[ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.]

From a lower sunrise born
Light is breaking
Through the eyelids of the morn.
Earth, awaking,
Turns her face towards the light,
All bright with dew,
Casts aside the mists of night,
And lives anew.

But a weight upon her eyes —
Ah! not like sleep—
And a darkness o'er her lies,
So still and deep,
Which forbids to come again
For her, on earth,
Dawn of day, or summer's rain,
Or grief, or mirth.

Who would mourn when on her eyes
Another dawn

Springs, brighter far than those which rise
For bird or fawn?
Who would mourn a life so passed,
Without a stain?
The spirit home, the door made fast
'Gainst change, and pain.

Take this other littte one,
Mary, mother;
Jesus died—who is thy Son
And our Brother.
He it was that took her hence,
Out of love;
"Took her for her innocence,"
To live above.

THE MOSS ROSE.

The angel who sprinkles the dew on the flowers
Fell asleep on a beautiful morning in June
'Neath the shade of a rose-tree, all fragrant and cool,
And his sleep was so quiet he slept until noon.

Awaking, he said, "O, thou beautiful being!
I know not thy name, but no flower in our heaven
Has an odor more sweet, and whatee'r thou canst wish,
I will give in return for the joy thou hast given."

"With a new grace adorn me," the blushing rose said,
And her blossoms shook perfume around them in showers,
When lo! Without lessening her beauty of form,
He adorned with soft moss the bright queen of the flowers.

So Charity—loveliest grace from on high!
Like the vesture of moss which the angel threw o'er,
Adds a charm to the heart, and the lips, and the eye
Of the dear one who lightens the load of the poor.

Make presents to the rich and great,
That they may make thee gifts again—
Thy heart will still remain as dry
As dusty earth without the rain.
But give to those who cannot give
Aught else but prayers and gratitude—
Then, then thy heart begins to live,
And thou art numbered with the good.

CHARITY.

Long suffering Charity! from whose blessed hand
The wretched find relief when hope is dead;
In whose large thought man's sins are all forgot;
In whose warm heart opposing faiths and creeds

To shut the founts of pity have no power,
But, like the sunshine and the genial rain,
They flow on the unjust and just alike.

Artists have painted thee in glowing health,
A lovely woman, from whose bosom streams
Warm jets of milk to feed her ruddy babes;
But I would wrap thee up in widow's weeds,
And make thee pale from seeing sights of woe;
Shear off the clustering ringlets from thy head—
The natural adornment of the sex,
And bend thee o'er the dying outcast's bed;
Pouring sweet consolation in his ear
Whose tougue may never thank thee for thy love.

Oh! not for thee the paltry thanks of man!
Not for his admiration, or his praise,
Are these poor wastelings housed, and clothed, and fed;
Not for his changeful, vain and lip-deep thanks
Guid'st thou these little ones to kneel in prayer,
Who, but for thee, were lorn and motherless—
But for the thanks that come untrumpeted
To those whose hearts like thine to God are given.

Widowed to all the vanities of life,
The midnight revel, dress, and pride, and wealth,
Trinkets, and earthly love, and idleness.
Instead of these, 'tis thine to look upon
The deep, wide wound which never may be closed

While darkness clips this weary world in twain,
And, with a diligent and patient hand,
Strive to bind up and stanch the stream that sin
Keeps ever open in humanity.

A DREAM.

I.

I dreamed that through the air,
Half swooning, to another land I came;
A world unknown it was, without a name,
It held nor joy, nor care.

II.

Like a calm ocean floor
Which the wind stirs not, nor the trembling star
E'er drops its silver light, there stretched afar
A plain without a shore.

III.

And on that plain was spread
White, cold, and motionlesss, without complaint,
Or sigh, or look of woe, or murmur faint—
The unbaptizèd dead!

IV.

No day, no night had they;
Twilight, without its hope of sun or moon,
And a vague mist from some unseen lagoon
Hung over them for aye.

V.

Though life was there in part,
Silence forever, like a frozen bird,
Spread her congealèd wings, and never heard
The beating of a heart.

VI.

And one I knew was there;
For through the lids I saw her eyes below,
Like violets covered with untimely snow.
I knew her golden hair.

VII.

O, pale and voiceless dove!
Her mother's tears lay on her cheek, alas!
And on her brow, like breath upon a glass,
My last, last kiss of love.

VIII.

I could nor weep nor pray,
My tongue refused to speak her sainted name,
When, lifted upwards like a struggling flame,
I reached and blessed the day.

THE FIRST SONG-BIRD.

Earliest warbler of the year,
What a welcome song is thine!
Coming ere the birds appear
On the tree or tangled vine.

Winter scarce has said adieu,
Not a wild flower to be seen
Peeping through the frozen dew—
Not a single blade of green.

Yet the something in thy heart
Tells thee Spring will come to bless,
And you straight begin your part,
Piping in the wilderness.

Naught to add, and naught to spare,
Still the self-same song you sing,
Perfect at the first, and now;
Ave! ave to the Spring!

Ah! thou art like dawn of day
To the sleepless weary-eyed,
Or like young humility
Springing in the heart of pride;

Or like the moonrise on the sea,
That reveals the wished-for shore;
Or like the flowers that silently
Bloom o'er those we see no more.

Other birds have finer notes,
But they wait till skies are fair
Ere they tune their gentle throats;
Thine are heard when earth is bare.

Deeper than my listening ear
Let thy song of hope descend;
Let a meaning still more dear
With thy strains of gladness blend.

Hint at something finer still
Than the shadows of the leaves,
Or the lily by the rill,
Ruddy fruit, or yellow sheaves.

That the Spring may be to me
Type of the eternal Spring;
And, while listening to thee,
Learn in darkest day to sing.

ASPIRATION.

What is sunshine, what is dew,
Gentle rain, or balmy air?
Herbs and weeds, as well as you,
Get their share.
What is clothing, shelter, food?
Birds and beasts, with little care,
In the field or pathless wood
Find their share.
What is treasure, gems and gold?
Can they have a charm for thee?
Shallow men, and women bold
Rich may be.

What the idle breath of fame,
On the idle lips of men?
Soon, like withered leaves on flame,
Cold again.
Wilt thou be content with this,
Which the birds and weeds enjoy?
Cheat thyself, and call it bliss,
Delight and joy?
What is shared by men unjust
Cannot be the highest prize;
From thy feet shake off the dust,
And higher rise!
Human wisdom, vain and proud,
Can but hide the light of love,
As the changeful, drifting cloud
The sun above.
From the mountain's crown of snow
Earth is wider seen, 'tis true,
But the heavens darker grow
To the view.
Wealth and knowledge, fame and power,
So tempting to the fools of time,
Fail to purchase for one hour
The hight sublime,
Where sit enthroned the higher gifts
Of Charity, and Hope, and Faith,
Which soothe, sustain, and guide, and lift
O'er life and death.
Oh, more than sunshine, food or praise,

Or aught this fevered world can give,
Aspire to; and to Christ upraise
Thine eye and live!

HOPE.

Bruce reached the fountains of the Nile
Through perils strange and deserts vast;
All hardships he could brave and smile;
Why sank his heart in triumph's hour?
What shadow o'er his soul was cast?

That shadow comes to every man
Whose heart with youthful ardor burns
To find, and taste, and drink, and scan
The fountains of the wine of life.
He drinks, and 'neath the shadow mourns.

He pines for that which is not here,
A joy sustained, a peace secure,
A love that is not twin to fear,
A beauty indestructible,
A life where hope cannot endure.

MILWAUKEE BAY.

Let Naples boast her azure bay,
Or Bengal, 'neath perpetual noon;
Let Mormon Turks, with opium drugged,
Snore to the waves of Scanderoon.

For wild Biscay I do not care,
Or strands remote, however gay—
Let me but live beside the fair
And beautiful Milwaukee Bay.
Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay!

'Twas love that formed Milwaukee Bay—
The earth, enamored of the wave
Stretched out her dusky arms afar,
And won, and kept her lover brave.
'Tis love that bids the waters lave,
And kiss the shore in starry spray,
And murmured music evermore—
For love I praise Milwaukee Bay!
Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay.

For haply at her window now,
A lady sits, of soul so true:
Love in her heart, peace on her brow,
And purer than the morning dew,
Perhaps she sings the song I love—
Perhaps her eyes now eastward stray—
Her voice is like the turtle dove—
Her eyes—they shame Milwaukee Bay!

Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or star, or moonlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay!

Ah! what is fame, or wealth, or power,
Without the healing joys of home?
For these we stem the stormy wave;
For these to distant shores we roam.
Then, as our barque glides through the deep,
This song shall cheer us on our way;
We sing the joys of steadfast love,
We sing of fair Milwaukee Bay!
Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay.

PRIDE.

Red rose the sun upon Culloden Moor,
Then hid behind the gloomy clouds his head;
The budding heath bent down beneath the tread
Of stubborn clansmen from their mountains hoar,
Which, ere the morn should pass, bedewed with gore,
Would be their bed.

Untamed by want, undaunted by the foe,
Old Scotia's sons prepare them for the fight;
The tartans wave, the broadswords flash in light,

The savage, screaming, pipes, the pipers blow,
And in the stir their bosoms throb and glow
With stern delight.

Sullen, upon the left, with muttered words,
The brave McDonalds stand with cold disdain;
The right was ever theirs on battle plain,
And so they hack the heather with their swords,
Nor will they move to strike the southern hordes
For loss or gain.

In vain with bursting heart their agèd chief
Essays to lead them. Then, with heavenward eyes,
"My children have forsaken me!" he cries,
And rushes wildly on a gathered sheaf
Of bayonets, to still his mighty grief,
And falls, and dies!

The day is lost! The broken clans have fled.
The chivalry of ancient Caledon,
Now but remembered 'mong the past and gone—
That fatal day was scattered, hunted, dead—
Which might, but for the pride that Satan bred,
The field have won.

Oh, warrior, on this rugged field of time!
Whose cause is Truth, whose sword is sharp and good,
Stand'st thou upon the left, in sullen mood,
To beat the air like these in this my rhyme?
Think of it now, ere yet thy morning's prime
Set not in blood.

The day will pass; and, whether high or low,
Esteemed or scorned, thy place may be, death smites
Alike right wing and left, and him who fights,
And him who fights not, and our victory
Is incomplete till pride shall in us die,
For love of right.

LAKE MICHIGAN.

[WINTER.]

Slow heave thy sullen waves,
Laden with crushling ice, vast Michigan!
Weighed down, and half forgotten by the sun,
They die in hollow caves.

No wild fowl, swinging, dreams
Upon thy bosom, or descends to hide,
Leaving her magic circles fading wide—
No sunny white sail gleams.

Like steam, up from thy breast
The frore mist rises, desolate and gray;
And where the bright sky kissed thee far away,
Dull blotting clouds do rest.

Upon thy pebbly beach,
O'er which the laughing summer waters leaped,
Huge, jagged, frozen battlements are heaped,
As far as eye can reach.

Crowned with dull, blackened snow,
And broken fragments, like a crumbling fort,
Thy mighty waves have tossed them as in sport,
Then sank to moan below.

Stormy, or calm, or gay,
How much like life, this life of ours, thou art!
So gelid caution chills the frustrate heart,
And checks its mirthful play.

O, ere the wintry time
Steals, frost-like, o'er my youthful eye and breast,
Dimming sweet nature's beauties, let me rest,
And wake in Heaven's clime!

CHRISTMAS.

When all the music of the earth is dumb,
What song of white-winged seraph floateth near?
From what celestial region do they come,
Those strange, sweet pulsings of the atmosphere?

From all the stars that haste to meet the morn
A purer radiance beams; and, full of joy,
Like silver rain upon the growing corn—
Earth her low, murmuring echoes doth employ.

The stillness of the night o'er all around
Spreads like the pinions of a brooding dove;
Yet wondrous melodies of heav'n-born sound
Glide, trembling, thro' the air, and whisper—"Love!"

Strife is asleep beneath the banner's fold—
The rust is gathering on the idle spear—
The time the pale-mouthed prophets had foretold
Of universal peace, at last is here.

For lo! within yon shed a babe is born,
"The Prince of Peace"—the brother of the poor,
Who, by his immortality, hath sworn
That wounded death may trouble man no more.

Around his sacred head an angel band
Gaze, wrapp'd in wonder at eternal Love,
Who left the pure, unclouded spirit land,
With sinful man in sorrow here to move.

With the white-bearded shepherds of the plain
Let us bow down and silently adore;
A sinless child has come to wash the stain
That shut against us Heaven's crystal door.

"O! glory be to God in Heaven high!
And on the earth, to men of good will, Peace!"
Love, leading by the hand Equality,
Shall dwell upon the world till time shall cease.

Bless'd be thy hallow'd eyelids, tender child,
Formed of pure love, though clothed in mystery!
Blessing to thee, oh, maiden undefiled!
And hold him gently on thy gentle knee.

Forestal not thirty years to mar thy joy,
Pierce not to days of sorrow that must be,
But like a mortal mother kiss thy boy,
Nor dream of darkness and of Calvary!

Another day will do to sigh and weep—
Another day will do to see the tomb—
To-day our hearts with pure delight shall leap—
To-day we will not think of grief or gloom.

Joy to the world! Now let the sparkling wine
Dance in bright bubbles over happy lips;
A brother's birth hath made us half divine—
Let care and hatred suffer an eclipse!

Pile up the fruits of Autumn on the board!
Pile on the fuel on the glowing fire!
And let earth's touching melodies be heard
Till the sweet flame of charity aspire—

Consuming all the discords of the past,
And lighting new affections into life;
Rounding the too sharp boundaries of caste,
And blunting slander's poison-pointed knife.

And let the "left hand" do its work unseen,
That love for many errors may atone;
Remember the poor working ones who glean
The stubble-field of life—the harvest gone.

So may this day, o'er all the breadth and length
Of this great land, on grateful hearts descend,
That He, our Hope, our Glory, and our Strength—
The Babe now born—may bless us to the end!

SUNSET.

Down goes the crimson sun, and, as he falls,
The gathering clouds, all plashed with bloody light,
Lean over him and catch his dying smile—
A smile that speaks of triumph and of joy;
Like some victorious chieftain in a pool
Of his own gore, with just enough of life
To hurl a handful of his shining spears,
An answer to his death wound, and then close
His heavy eyelids like a demi-god!

And high upon the battlemented walls
The silver moon, with one attendant star,
Looks like his lady, sorrowful and pale,
With one child near—her loveliest and last.
Calm as the deepest grief, the widowed queen
Slowly descends, and bright and brighter glows,
In his departing glory, till she sinks
Into the yawning tomb of mountain clouds
Which, like the gloomy grandeur of the grave,
Lie piled in ridges betwixt earth and heaven.

Come forth, ye hosts celestial, and watch
One night above these most illustrious dead.
Peer through the murky atmosphere of earth
O'er the horizon, with your reddened eyes!
Rise from yon beds of faint and tender green,
And from the hazy dwellings where the strife
Of myriad brightnesses a girdle weaves
Of light like pearl, for deep immensity,
Or from the fields of azure, or far blue,
And heal the air with spherèd requiem.
And in my soul, that like a sea-shell lies
Upon the barren beach of time, let fall
One wandering cadence of the wondrous song,
That in its vaulted chambers I may keep
The prisoned echo when the music dies.

MIDNIGHT.

Hush! Listen to that sound! Another year
  Has run and finished its predestined race,
And lies all pallid on its wintry bier,
  The dust already gathering on its face.
Of all I fancied worthy while it sped,
  How little now remains for me to keep!
The stately garment is a tattered shred,
  The loudest songs are shrunk in silence deep.
What! from the vanquished giant shall we bear
  No spoils away? no trophy for a crown?

No hardihood of soul to do or dare
For love or virtue *more* than we would own?
If this be so, indeed the year is dead,
And in forgetfulness may hide its head.

The last vibration dies. Another year,
Strange as a new-born babe, is come to-day,
And starts brimful of joy on its career,
All vain regrets and fears are cast away.
I, too, in steady hope lift up mine eye,
And cast aside the withered leaves that cling
Around my heart, as, when the spring birds cry,
The awakening buds begin their blossoming.
Immortal joy on patient hope awaits,
Immortal joy awaits on good endeavor,
Immortal joy sits by the crystal gates,
Which, to the humbly just, are open ever.
'Gainst those I love, O, may they never close,
But entering, may they find supreme repose.

LEAVES.

Fluttering and quivering to the ground,
Like gems from monarch's crown
The leaves fall down
With a faint, rustling sound.

Crimson, and emerald, and gold,
A beauteous shower of death;
The sinking breath
Of the yèar's fame, untold.

So laurel leaves from poet's head
The wafture of Time's wing
To earth shall bring,
All pale, and sere, and dead.

Away! The fame is not the fruit!
The fame is not the seed!
Leaves fall indeed,
Yet never can take root.

But lovely thoughts can never die,
Though time and fame may pass
Like breath on glass,
They live eternally.

SUNRISE.

[IN NOVEMBER.]

The morning star now fades in larger light,
That springs above the eastern verge of earth,
And frost like diamond-dust is on the leaves,
And thick white mists are brooding o'er the stream;
No song of birds is heard to greet the morn,
Nature hath folded life beneath her wings,
And patient sits, 'mong leafless trees, forlorn.

But lo! to turn her thoughts from withered joys,
The banners of the sun, all bright with gold,
Rise up against the sky; and near behind
The sun himself, with step of majesty,
The even majesty of Time and Fate,
Mounts to his flaming chair, and with his beams
Lights up with beauty all the faded world.

O Lord of Light! so burst upon my soul
On that great morning when all nature lies
Withered, and pale, and dead, beneath Thy feet—
O then this little spark of dust remember,
Whose tenant now—relying upon Thee—
Leaps over the "To come," and rests her foot,
All trembling, with anticipated bliss.

TO THE WISCONSIN RIVER.

Flow onward, mighty river of the land
  Where my first roof-tree rose!
Sweep onward o'er thy fields of shining sand,
  And all thy islands, where the wild vine grows,
Lifting its purple tendrils to the light,
Cheer with thy waters bright!

Within thy bowers the wood-doves coo unseen;
  Thy matted coverts hide

The timid doe beneath their leafy screen,
And her young fawn steps wondering at her side;
They in thy shallows dip their ebon feet,
In sultry summer heat.

Two hundred years ago, upon thy wave
Sailed one whose honored name
Has made thy waters dear—the good, the brave
Marquette, whose heart and soul were all aflame
With love of God and His poor children here—
A love that casts out fear.

Perhaps beside this rocky bluff, alone,
He watched yon dark-green pine
Clutch with his strenuous roots the rifted stone,
Like noble poverty that scorns to whine,
A sturdy patriarch on a rugged soil
That triumphs in his toil.

Like a fair girl with ribbons round her tied,
The slender birch tree rears
Its tattered, creamy stem against the side
Of the gray rock; the rock as background bears
All lovely tints, from Nature's pallette made,
For shadow, light and shade.

O from thy far off sandy reservoir,
And from thy grooved rocks
Pour down, as now, obstructions evermore;
The sand-bar that, forever shifting, mocks

The wheels of commerce, that thy calm, sweet air
No sound of traffic bear!

Soul-searing Traffic, the foul lust of gain,
Beauty's destroyer, death
To the sweet fellowship of man—thy stain
Dims the pellucid stream, and taints heaven's breath,
Widens the gulf betwixt the rich and poor—
O, come not near this shore!

Sweep onward, mighty river of the land
Where death first visited
My lowly dwelling, and with icy hand,
Chilled the warm streams that from my heart were fed.
On, on, like life, like time! We haste, like thee,
On to the peaceful sea.

THE LABORER.

My shadow falls among my feet,
The sun is hot, the weeds are thick;
And I must toil through scorching heat
All day, be I or well or sick.

How cool is now yon fragrant bower
Where master with his book reclines,
And wiles away the lazy hour
Beneath the shadow of the vines.

For him the purple clusters grow,
For him to ruddy wine they change,
That he may set his heart aglow.
The providence of God is strange!

Be hushed, my soul! nor let one stain
Of envy in my bosom rest;
Nor let me of my lot complain,
For He is just who knows us best.

Peace dwells beneath my humble roof,
My sleep is sound till morning dawns;
Unholy things God keeps aloof,
And shields my doe and all her fawns.

My labor sweetens common food,
My poverty doth banish fear;
My hope is in the holy rood,
Our lasting city is not here.

Then let me cut the weeds away—
Those, too, that spring within my heart;
If I knew all, no doubt I'd say—
"To each is given the fitting part."

TO A BIRD IN CHURCH.

[PALM SUNDAY.]

What seekest thou, forlorn, bewildered bird?
Beneath this temple's roof what seekest thou?
No living foliage invites thee here,
Nor pendant bough,

Nor sparkling stream that leaps among the stones
Then stops to mirror heaven on its breast,
Nor seeds, wide-scattered, nor the down and moss
To build thy nest.

Perhaps the storm without hath 'frighted thee;
The drifting of yon gloomy mass of cloud,
With horrid threads of fire, and deafening peals
Of thunder loud.

So in thou fliest, to where, before her Son,
The Virgin Mother kneels, most fair to see,
Her garments blue and white—emblems of truth
And purity.

And higher still, to where the Almighty Dove,
Forever blessed, spreads his azure wings,
Tunest thy simple pipe; then, overcome
With splendor, clings—

Trembling and panting, where the orient light,
Flowing through panes of crimson, blue and gold,
Streams in and all around in many a bright
And dazzling fold.

Too bright for thee, who with grey nature dwells,
And for relief thine eye is cast below
Upon the purple-muffled crucifix—
Our weal or woe.

On that thou lightest, but, alas! for thee
Earth holds a curse, and peace is short-lived here
Even for a guileless bird: our cunning strength
Has taught thee fear.

And though from swinging censer there ascend
Volumes of incense as the palms are blessed,
The fresh green branches to thy wearied wings
Can give no rest.

Yet, while the blackness gathers 'round about,
Stay thou. Wait till the heavy portals ope
Upon the smiling sky that lies beyond,
Like dreams of hope.

We wait the moving of the sullen door,
The dark division of our mystic life,
Whose spring, by unseen angels' finger touched,
Ends earthly strife.

We, *too*, like thee by storms and darkness 'frighted,
And clouds of wrong—where the swift fire of thought
Descends, servant to Sin—have hasted hither
And shelter sought;

And with a feeble wing have tried to rise,
And with a twilight eye essayed to scan
The mighty Faith, so broad, so deep, so high—
God's love to man!

And, dazzled with its splendor and its power,
Its love, its meekness, its munificence,
Have found with humbled, yet with grateful hearts,
Our insignificance.

MAY.

Summer once more is here!
April hath laughed, or wept itself away,
And in its place the welcome-footed May
Gladdens the opening year.

Among her sunny hair,
Twined with fruit blossoms, naked, sweet, and new—
The fragrant hyacinth and iris blue—
Compose a garland fair.

A robe of tender green
Tied 'round her girdle with fresh violets,
Mixed with forgotten flowers the streamlet wets,
About her form is seen.

And in her hand she bears,
Half filled with dew, a gold-mouthed tulip cup,
Which, if one look in ere the sun be up,
He loses half his cares.

For, Hebe-like, she brings
Wine of the morning from the springs of peace,
Whose calm shall soothe the day, and will not cease
When night hath closed her wings.

Eyed like the azure dove,
And showers of lilies from her fingers white
Drop on the earth and sprinkle it with light
To catch the dews of love.

O lady of our heart,
I sing of May, that I may sing of thee.
Dearer than Hope's own month which now we see.
And brighter far—thou art.

JUNE.

I.

Ah! placid days of June!
You see the lilies of the valley born,
You see the dew-drops on the springing corn,
And drink them all ere noon.
For you the wilding rose
Opens her blushing bosom to the light;
For you, from clover-fields of green and white,
The honied fragrance flows.

II.

For you, yon stream glides on,
Bearing thy cloudless skies upon its breast;

The picture of a soul by love possessed,
Gentle, and deep, and strong;
Who, having wandered far,
Dashed over rocks, and sunk in pools of woe,
Is led at last through meadows green to flow
By some blest guiding star.

III.

In the cool Indian trail,
For you the small dove sits with lustrous eyes,
And seems naught less than bird from paradise
Until we hear it wail,
And then it speaks of earth,
A chastened echo, exquisite and low,
To hollow voices of the heart, whose woe
Finds *words* as rude as mirth.

IV.

O, lady, ever fair!
That I may sing of thee, I sing of June;
But weak the words, and harsh, alas, the tune
That spring 'midst pain and care.

THE DATURA.

[A FLOWER THAT BLOOMS AT SUNSET.]

Lovely Datura, the great sun is sinking.
Soon in the twilight the shadows will fail,
Hesperus, herald of evening, is shining,
Open thy blossoms so pure and so pale.

Now when the moon, like a sickle of silver,
Reaping a harvest of light from the west,
Glows through the purple haze brighter and brig hter
Now, when the voice of rude labor finds rest—

Unlock the casket, and scatter the fragrance,
Open the bosom that modesty sealed
All through the garish day—fainting to see thee,
Alone to the stars be thy beauty revealed.

All the night long thou wilt smile through the darkness,
Emblem of Hope, shining brightest in gloom,
Day flowers are fair, as friends in prosperity,
Thou, like a lamp hanging over the tomb.

Yet thou art nothing with all thy surroundings,
Save as adornment for her who for me
Bore on her bosom the blessed Redeemer,
And so at her beautiful feet I lay thee.

THE SEA SHELL.

A little girl sits silent at her play,
With wondering eyes, and listening mouth and ear,
And forehead fair as e'er was formed of clay,
O'er which the careless sunny ringlets play—
What does she hear?

Gazing on nothing—as a poet might
If thoughts of fearful beauty filled his mind,
Her face turned up in such a trustful light—
Surely those azure eyes, so soft and bright,
Cannot be blind!

Ah, now I see! Her rosy fingers hold
A shell, brought from some island of the blest,
'Round whose cool shore the sapphire waves are rolled,
A pearly shell, with crimson, green and gold
Upon its breast.

Look, for a moment! In its spiral cave
What wealth of pure and tender beauty lies,
As if some orb concealed rose on the wave,
And all its bosom tremulous should lave
With matchless dyes.

And now she holds it to her ear again,
And listens, as a lover for the song
Of his beloved, to those strange sounds that wane
And swell—weird, wandering murmurs of the main—
Its vaults along.

Dear, simple child! Now let me be like thee!
And for a shell the world will suit my soul.
Its wondrous beauty let me feel and see,
And on mine ear the eternal melody
Of heaven shall roll.

A WOUNDED DOVE.

Alas, poor, panting thing!
Huddled 'mong common weeds to pine and die,
Unseen, unsoothed by any kindred eye
To which thy heart might cling.

So voiceless in thy pain,
Thy bosom flutters like a dying child;
From broken wing and breast, in startings wild,
Quick drops the ruddy rain.

Ah! that man's life should seek
Thy death! That he should use his might to mar
A form so beautiful, and quench the star
Within thine eye so meek!

He never heard thy voice
Who struck thee down with his far-reaching power,
Else he had left thee in thy beechen bower,
And let thy mate rejoice.

For, sweet as holy day
With one we cherish came thy simple tune,
Waking the stillness of the air in June
To plaintive melody.

Thy murmured notes no more
Through silken leaves and pendant boughs shall come
To cheer the weary heart that wanders home;
Thy sinless life is o'er.

PEACE.

As fades a cloud upon the blue,
When summer skies are still and fair,
As dies a ripple on the deep,
Or early snowflake on the stream—
So ceased her breath upon the air,
As if 't were better not to breathe.

The hair, a golden shower, unbound,
Strayed o'er her white and stainless breast;
One, like the sweet fire of her love,
The other, like her chastity;
And her thin hand lay near her heart,
As if still conscious what it held.

Still mindful, though no more to move,
That in its prison bars so pale
The paler image of her love
Lay there in sculptured ivory;
That so her last faint wave of life
Might die against his bleeding feet.

Sweet picture of supreme repose!
Frail barque, the harbor now is gained,
Thy freight is landed, and thy sails,
White with the bleaching storm, may hang
All motionless against the mast—
The winds can never stir them more!

STREW WHITE LILIES ON HER GRAVE.

Strew white lilies on her grave,
She is pure and white as they—
Precious soul and pallid clay,
Which our Lord made haste to save.
Lilies bloom and die in May,
She is gone from us away—
Strew white lilies on her grave.

Plant a rose above her head,
Symbol of her glowing heart,
Which could choose the better part.
Not to human feeling dead,
But for holiest love of God,
Plant the rose-tree in the sod—
It will bloom above her head.

TWILIGHT.

Slow sinks the light 'neath the western horizon,
Barred by long clouds of the somberest hues;
Hushed is the song of the bird in the maple,
The rose-blooms hang wet with the gathering dews;
Deep in the heart of the primeval forest
The wind, sunk to sleep on a moss pillow, lies;
Now 't is the hour when, O, mother of Jesus,
We turn to the light of thy beautiful eyes.

Faintly the stars from the deep are emerging,
The dragon's lone howling, the bat's muffled flight,
And the low wizard croon of the reeds by the river,
Fill the woods, and the glooms, and the air with affright.
Outcasts and wanderers on the lone desert,
Far, far away seems the land that we prize;
Trouble around us and sorrow within us,
O, turn upon us those beautiful eyes.

Send thou a foretaste of heaven to visit
Our bosoms with peace; and by faith let us see
And hope for the time when, with fetters unloosened
We live with the "Fruit of thy womb" and with thee.
Pity our darkness, O, gate of the morning!
See, our dim day in obscurity dies;
Shield us this night, and in death's gloomy valley
O, turn upon us thy beautiful eyes.

MARY.

Lowly, modest Irish maiden,
What doth make thy face so fair?
Is it comeliness of feature,
Or that wealth of dark-brown hair?

Is it that the roses, blending
With the lilies pure and meek,
Seem to faint and die of passion,
Pleased to be upon thy cheek?

Ah! not these alone could ever
From my heart such homage win,
Did thy outward beauties spring not
From the lovelier soul within.

Simple, innocent and pious,
Wise without philosophy,
One sweet sentence from thy mouth is
More than learnèd speech to me.

Garish ball-room, midnight revel,
Have no charms to lure thy sight;
Constant, humble daily labor—
That is thine from morn till night.

Far off in a verdant island,
Where the wrongs of ages brood,
Sits a mother by the hearthstone
Of her cottage near the wood:

Gazing on the dying embers
Which are wasting like her frame,
Then upon the sacred symbol
Whispering her Mary's name.

And the angels, smiling, see thee
Hoard for her thy scanty store,
And upon thy beauteous forehead
Shower their graces, more and more.

Then that pair of curtained sapphires—
Those dear liquid eyes of thine—
Clear, and deep, and soft, and winning,
Like a holy morning, shine.

Then those moist, vermillion-jeweled
Portals of thy balmy breath,
Wear a smile more like a seraph's
Than a mortal's here beneath.

Lowly, modest, Irish maiden,
Sister with the dark-brown hair,
Beauty from thy *heart* is beaming
That doth make thy face so fair.

ST. JOHN, EVANGELIST.

[WRITTEN DURING THE CONSECRATION OF ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL.]

Beloved disciple of the Lord of Love!
Virgin evangelist of virgin's Son!
O, earliest bud upon the Mystic Vine,
Still budding virgins! bend thy haloed head,
Look down and see the spoils that Love has won!

Two thousand years, on wings of cloud and flame,
Their tragic course have well nigh flown since thou,
Leaning thy youthful head on God's own breast,
Like lily resting on a peaceful lake,

Or starry drop upon a crystal spring,
Saw'st the dark traitor's hand dip in the dish
As friend with friend, while hell was in his heart.

Two thousand years since, with prophetic fire,
Thy eagle spirit soared beyond the clouds
Among the dazzling splendors of the sun,
And told of that which has but *now* begun;
And backward swept through gulfs of countless years
To things before the day-star—for the power
To utter that sublime immortal strain,
"In the beginning was The Word—The Word
Was with God—The Word was God Himself!"

O, guileless one! untarnished innocence,
Courage, and constancy and love are thine;
Fit one to tend the mother of our Lord,
Fit one to be her first adopted son,
Fit one to soothe love-sorrow-laden heart
With Jesus's love reflected back from thee!

True love alone is brave; thy soul sincere,
Touched by the finger of the God of Truth,
Would pass with joy through "boiling oil" to death;
And, harder still, trod this base thorny life
A hundred years in purity of heart.

True love alone abides and works and wins;
From Parthian plains, and Patmos lone and wild,
Thy "thunder" rolls along and wakes the world,

And stretching broadly to the setting sun,
The all-embracing love, that lights the stars,
Will bind this ruined earth with flowers divine,
When man (the circle of his race complete)
Shall rise to where no sun shall ever set.
Virgin evangelist of virgin's Son,
Look down and see the spoils which Love has won!

A HOUSEHOLD MEMORY.

Before thy death no boding scream
  Disturbed the silence of the night,
No pallid *Banshee* 'round the door
  Forewarning walked, in spectral white.

No *Keener's* song bewailed thee dead,
  No *ululula* broke the air,
No frantic wailing 'round thy bed
  Marred faith's submission by despair.

Yet strangest shadow of thy fate
  Fell on our hearts, and deeper grew;
Thy rose-tree died without a bloom,
  Then from the root sprang up anew.

Fit emblem of thy budding life,
  O'er which the earth has wrapped its gloom;
Fit emblem of that life to come
  That breaks the fetters of the tomb!

Thy mother's silent grief and mine,
Subdued by heavenward hope and faith,
Was mourning meet for thy young soul
That sunk so patiently to death.

And for thy *Keen*—unopened flower!
By angels gathered from the stem—
The holiest song ear ever heard,
The Church's solemn "requiem"!

TO FATHER MARQUETTE.

Though no stone marks the end of thy journey on earth,
Though the spot be unknown where thy ashes repose,
And the river obscure keeps the secret and dies
Which the murmuring Michigan ne'er can disclose,
Yet we may not forget the disciple of Xavier!
Thy faith, and thy zeal, and thy labors of love
For the children who sat in the shadow of darkness,
Where error and night their dim labyrinths wove.

Though the name of the river "Conception" be lost,
To "Mary Immaculate" gratefully given,
Our gratitude lives, and the name may be found
Yet on earth, or be one of the rivers in heaven;
And we may not forget, other names of thy giving
Live still in this region, where plenty has smiled

And now teems with new life—where the cross of the
Master
Was planted by thee when a wilderness wild.

Ah! no grave of the Huron, "fur-lined" is thy bed,
And no taper is burning above thy lone rest,
And the smoke of the incense has melted in air,
And the cross has sank down and unseen on thy
breast;
And if o'er the blue lake by the Indians who loved thee
Thy bones have been borne ere thy flesh knew decay,
The music that rose from the deep "De profundis"
Long since into silence has trembled away.

And no altar remains where was offered by thee,
On those shores unfrequented, thy last sacrifice;
And the trees that hung over have mixed with the
mould,
And the new forests spread their green roofs to the
skies.
Yet the names that were last on thy lips never perish,
Nor the love they impart to such spirits as thine,
Which, while pallor creeps after the fast-ebbing life-
tide,
Can light up the soul with a rapture divine!

A CLUSTER OF GRAPES.

Here is a generous cluster from the vine,
Breathing of honey, wrapped in smoky bloom,
Like the dim, hazy atmosphere of earth

Above the purple foliage scattered 'round,
When joyous Autumn crowns the waning year.

Shaped like the heart of man, and like it, too,
The sport of ruffian winds and dusty heat,
Suspended 'twixt the earth and smiling heaven,
Each berry brimful of the richest juice,
And round as is the sphered eternity.

Elected fruit, forever to be prized!
Most beautiful in nature and to faith,
Under whose dewy mantle the Beloved,
In mercy to the life which He hath kindled,
Hides His unutterable radiance!

MOTHER EVE.

The mother of the human race
  In solitude walked out one day,
And gazed upon the sinful earth
  Whose vales all desolated lay.

The thorns and thistles stabbed her feet,
  And memory stabbed her gentle breast;
The big, hot tears ran down her cheek,
  And wistfully she looked for rest.

At length a rose-tree she espied
  Within a sheltered, sunny dell,
And, limping painfully along,
  Upon the ground beside it fell.

Within its fragrant atmosphere
How long she lay she did not know;
For time is shortened during bliss,
But lengthened sadly out in woe,

Much would have more—the curse of greed;
The mortal longing to possess
Had sunk full deeply in her soul—
The bane of all our happiness.

With blossoms she would form a zone
Beneath her breasts, and deck her hair;
She reached her hand to break the branch,
And the sharp spines her fingers tear.

Weeping and bleeding Eva! We too, yet,
Still clutch the roses, and still feel the thorns;
The heedless soul that is on pleasure set,
Forgetting duty, droops her head and mourns

GUARDIAN ANGEL TO A SOUL.

"Lovely, wondering human soul,
Come to light, and joy, and peace!
Here is that which knows no change,
Here thy sorrows all shall cease;
Scorching sun and biting wind,
Every ill is left behind.

"Yon dark menial sent to take
Thy worn mantle at the door
In his lean and bony hands,
Comes to cloud thine eyes no more;
For the Master saith, 'within
Neither enters—death nor sin!'

"Much of evil thou hast known,
Wandering in the streets of time—
Justice sold, and talents used
To defend and cherish crime.
Now no more can fretting thought
Turn thy happiness to naught.

"Near the rose the thorn was hid,
Near the honey was the sting,
Fragile were the things beloved;
Though the blossoms came with spring,
By the blight the fruit was lost,
By the canker-worm or frost.

"Oh! the soul who loveth truth
While she lives on earth must sigh
For herself and all around;
Doubtless it is gain to die
When the Lord shall lend a spear
And a light to help her here.

"Let us stay our steps awhile
Here within these crystal walls,

Where the air is fragrant joy
And the light in showers falls
Till its sacred calm shall heal
All thou didst in dying feel.

"Strange is death! we know it not;
Yet that look of thine, so lost,
As if left by all the world—
Touched me, as the shadow crossed,
Dimming thy sweet, lustrous eyes—
Then I swiftly snatched my prize,

"Bore thee hence on rapid wing
Through the clinging mists and clouds,
Many hued and wonderful,
Which the twilight earth enshrouds,
Through that space where, form unknown—
Stainless color reigns alone.

"Thou hast seen these sheltering plumes,
Thou hast seen the patient hand
That, from hidden gulfs of sin,
Saved thee by a silken band,
And I bless the holy rood,
I have seen thy gratitude.

"Oh, what joy is this I feel!
I the Holy Will have done—
Brought thee from a prison house.
Now, thy endless life begun,

I must leave thee; yonder morn
Breaks, and my new charge is born.

"Ever blessed be the Light!
Ever blessed be the Love!
Ever blessed be the Power,
Flowing from the fount above,
Never wearied, never spent!"
He sung—and on his errand went.

"SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS."

[PARAPHRASE.]

Silent we sat by the ruins of Babylon,
When we remembered Zion, we wept;
In the midst of the willows our harps we suspended,
In their mute strings joy and melody slept.

And they who as captives had led us away, said,
"Sing of that Zion 'round which your hearts cling!"
O, how shall we sing in the land of the stranger
The song of the Lord? O, how shall we sing?

Oh, Hierosolyma! if I forget thee,
May my right hand in oblivion lie!
And my tongue to my jaws cleave if I prefer not
Thee and thy glory before my chief joy!

Be mindful, O Lord, of the children of Edom,
In the day of our power, who of Zion have said,
"Let her be empty, and wasted continually
To her foundations, and counted as dead?"

Woe unto thee, wretched daughter of Babylon!
Blest shall he be who shall give back to thee
The stern retribution with which *we* are visited!
For dashed 'gainst the stones shall thy little ones be!

BRIDGET.

Bridget is a lovely woman,
Yet she knows it not, I'm sure.
Tall and slender, like a lily—
Like a lily, sweet and pure.

Dewy gladness lights her blue eyes.
Innocence sits by her mouth,
And her breathing—coming, going—
Is like fragrance from the south.

Beautiful her simple words are,
Touched, like bloom upon a peach,
With a tone that speaks of Erin,
Now so far beyond our reach.

In her house is quiet order,
Nothing tardy, or in haste;
Mind and heart are poised so nicely,
She, though generous, will not waste.

When the gaudy day is over,
And we sit around the light,
Sure, the angels round her hover,
For her smile makes all things bright.

Like a posy of white flowers,
By her knee the children kneel,
Helped by many a timely whisper,
There they lisp their soft appeal.

When at night her pious fingers
Count her beads of sandal-wood,
Down her cheek there steals a tear-drop,
'Tis the tear of gratitude.

Ah! how modest her demeanor!
Now her eyes towards me stray,
Did she know what I am writing
From the room she'd glide away.

KNOW'ST THOU THE LAND?

Know'st thou the land? 'Tis where the cedar grows,
Between the rocks the crystal fountain flows;
The limpid streams weep from the solid stone,
And the dark pine tree stands, as on a throne—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my dear brother, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the river with its hundred isles?
Nature's bright mirror, when she frowns or smiles,
There, shadowy coverts hide the timid dove,
With moveless wing the eagle floats above—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my young hunter, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the lake, circled with rocks of gneiss?
There spirits dwell, and echo answers thrice;
The deadly snake and wild-cat have their lair,
And the pale birch-tree waves its trembling hair—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my young artist, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the garden, decked with fairest flowers?
A fountain sprinkles 'round its cooling showers,
The murmuring brook flows on like love divine,
In every sunny crevice hangs a vine—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my dear baby, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the sheltered cottage, winter proof?
The peace of Christ lives 'neath its humble roof,
The milk-white lambs bleat on the fresh green lawn,
And joyous birds sing welcome to the dawn—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my dear mother, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the chapel, seated on the rock?
Called of St. Mary, proof 'gainst tempest shock;

A fearful footbridge (like our path through time)
Leads to it, o'er the gorge sublime—
Say, dost thou know it? There, with thee,
O, my dear father, would that I could flee!

"SOLOMO."

The dawn springs slowly through the eastern sky,
It turns the fleecy clouds to isles of gold,
It strikes the cross on John's Cathedral spire,
And all the palaces that rise around;
Then o'er the bosom of Lake Michigan
The quivering bars of many-colored light
Break into starry tear-drops; far away
The waters murmur to the pebbly shore
Of something lost, that can return no more!

The flags droop half-mast on the harbored ships,
The bells toll silently from many a tower,
The grateful city sends her thousands forth
To pay the last sad tribute to his dust
Who planted her; for, in one stricken room
Lies powerless and still a mighty frame
That once enclosed a warm and generous heart,
Now heedless all of tears or sobs of woe—
The voiceless ashes of old "Solomo!"

'T was meet that he should die where swarthy chiefs
Could gaze upon the face of their tried friend,

Where silent squaws could through the darkness steal
To breathe a prayer and kiss his honored head,
That they should bury him and think him theirs;
And it was meet that he should here be brought
For his loved children and the city's sake
That he twice honored, and twice buried be,
For here his like we ne'er again shall see.

Ye men with glittering steel and measured tread,
He was a soldier, for he was a man!
Ye men who battle with the elements,
He was like you, and dared the elements!
Ye veteran pioneers of fertile brain
And iron arm, he was your elder brother!
Bear ye the body into God's own house,
Where lately too was borne his noble wife—
Before that altar where he knelt in life.

There let him rest a space, until the Church
Read her appointed prayers above her dead,
And sprinkle holy water on the pall,
And burn some grains of blessed olibanum,
And let the prisoned soul of music burst
In terror through the "Dies Iræ" hymn,
And from the dead unto the living speak,
And point with steady finger 'yond the grave,
Through His strong love who came the world to save!

The rites are paid, the eulogy is said,
The secret prayers for his soul's repose

Have upward sped on wings of faith and love,
The lights are out, the long procession moves,
And strains of mournful music swell and fade
Upon the air, and flashing in the sun
Up the far streets the bayonets are seen;
The nodding hearse, of which Death makes a throne,
Is out of sight, and "Solomo" is gone?

THE ABSENT ONE.

Oh, let me think once more of thee!
The early violets are seen,
The trodden grass again is green,
Again the warm south winds are free.
The many-folded silken buds
Are loosened by the sun and rain,
The trees hold up their hands again,
And Beauty walks our savage woods.
The swift-winged pigeons through the air,
Like long faint ripples on the sea,
Come north again; but not for thee
Do buds unfold, or skies grow fair.

The song of birds, the song of streams,
The new pulsations of the heart,
The love of nature and of art,
The re-resolves, the waking dreams—
All come again with April's gleams;

But thou, whose life was with the spring
A sweet accordance, ne'er can fling
Thine eyes' blue radiance here, it seems.
I dare not mourn—yet thought will take
A sober tint, a flight subdued,
And now and then will sit and brood
On things like thee for thy dear sake.

The bud is finer than the bloom,
The dawn is finer than the day,
And sweeter is the month of May
Than when the year is near its tomb.
The thought, new-born, that seems our own,
The spring, new-found among the stones,
And young Love's trembling, whispered tones
Of words half uttered, and withdrawn—
For Hope dwells with them; and afar
She points towards the distant hills
Where busy fancy paints and fills
Each expectation like a star.

THE PILGRIM OF ST. JUST.

[FROM COUNT VON PLATEN.]

Dark night it is, and the storms howl and roar;
Hispanian monks, oh, ope to me your door!

Here let me rest till wakened by the bell
Whose tongue sends you to church your beads to tell.

Whate'er your house affords for me prepare ;
A habit, and a coffin, and a prayer.

Initiate me—a little cell bestow
On one who once owned half this little world below !

The head which willing to your head bends down
Was once bediademed with many a crown !

These shoulders where your *serge* hangs, poor and scorned,
By the imperial ermine was adorned !

Now before death I'm dead—in my desire,
And fall in ruins like the old empire !

LAURA.

Long, long ago, beside the rushing Rhone,
In all the bloom of perfect womanhood,
Fair Laura Sade, robed in mantle green,
With violets sprinkled, upon which her hair,
In braided, witching, golden tresses fell—
Appeared to Petrarch. When he should have mourned
Christ's death, his heart with human passion burned.

Sad day that she was Sade, he in bonds !
She was another's, he another's, too ;
Alas ! for his misplaced, unseemly love !
An age he spent in unavailing sighs ;

And fears and envies, hopes and jealousies,
Unwritten, not unfelt, made wild unrest
Within the penetralia of his breast.

And yet, 'mid tears, and sleeplessness, and shame,
O, chaste and lovely flower! for thee alone,
Alive and dead,—that beauty might not die,
But live immortal, in immortal song—
Three hundred sonnets to thy peerlessness.
He, like a lonely and melodious dove,
Poured from his soul of constancy and love!

TO THE WILD ROSE.

Symbol of love divine,
  Five-petaled rose!
Sparkling with dewy wine,
On the uncultured sod
  Thy beauty glows,
Fresh from the hand of God.

One petal for each well,
  Each crimson fount,
Opened by sin and hell
On Jesu's body pale,
  In thee we count,
Wild rose of hill and dale!

Thou art my passion-flower;
For winter's storm
Of sleet or stony shower
Avails not to destroy
The peerless form
That fills my heart with joy.

When o'er the hills in June
I sighing come,
My soul all out of tune,
Jarred by the ills of time,
Thy blossoms dumb
Suggest a theme sublime.

The theme that fills with love
The earth beneath,
And all the stars above,
And scatters with its light
The gloom of death,
Turning to day our night.

THE LIVING SPRING.

A spring! A spring! I've found a spring
Beneath this budding linden tree;
Look! look! 'tis like a living thing
From the dark earth set free.

See! how it tosses up the sand,
  Forming an ever-varied flower,
Evolving from the centre still,
  And falling in a shower.

Green velvet moss grows round the brink,
  The crystal silence plays within,
Like diamond set in emerald—
  Or soul set free from sin.

It gushes through the starry moss,
  And runs a little space along,
Then falls, and makes a kind of noise,
  Half murmur and half song.

The song of joy has filled my soul,
  Within my heart the murmur broods;
The light of heaven is bright above,
  But all around stretch savage woods.

I praise the Providence that pours
  The waters from a thousand hills,
With adoration, love and awe,
  And gratitude my bosom thrills.

And yet I grieve that men still leave
  The beauteous springs, and wander far
Through lust and hatred; Nature's charms
  They heed not—or, if heeding, mar.

How many hearts would now rejoice,
Could they but sit in peace and see
This never-ceasing fountain fling
Its priceless treasure forth so free.

O, sailor, on the shrinking deck,
That nothing save a shower can save,
Thy golden cargo thou wouldst give
To dip thy hand in this clear wave.

Lone pilgrim on the desert wide,
Between two fires, the sun and sand,
O wert thou by this blessing's side,
To fill the hollow of thy hand!

Poor boy! stretched on the battle-field,
Parched by the fever of thy wound,
One draught of this would ease thy pain,
And lift thee from that deadly swound.

O weary soul! tossed to and fro
Among the horrors of the world,
Where sin and death march hand in hand,
With pale, polluted flag unfurled.

A spring—a brighter living spring
Than this, thy soul, by God's dear grace,
May find, and finding, drink, and live
With heaven's sunshine on thy face.

The wells of earth for thee will fail;
Then to the "Smitten Rock" O haste!
From thence the living waters flow,
Dear to the eye, sweet to the taste.

THE HOLY CROSS.

[FROM THE GERMAN.]

To my heart there comes a voice
From the Cross, so mildly pealing,
"Lo! what love I felt for thee,
Giving life to be thy healing!
See! my blood on Golgotha,
Flowing free, unasked, unbidden!
Ever near thee on the earth,
I am still—though veiled and hidden!"

Deeply moved, I sink adown,
Near the Holy Cross of sorrow;
All my fear my Saviour's frown,
All my hope from him I'll borrow.
Cease, then, idle tears and sighs
For earth's joys that quickly perish!
On the Cross I rest mine eyes,
Jesus' love alone I cherish.

TO ———.

Dear firstling of my little flock,
In tribute to the Master paid,
By what sweet streamlet dost thou feed?
What field, love-blessed and beauteous made?
In what fair sunlight, ne'er to fade
Or shadow need?

With trembling breath and sinking heart,
Hard was it for a father's tongue
To bid thy dear young soul, "depart!"
How hard, can ne'er be said or sung,
Or from the soul of sorrow wrung
By mimic art.

Again the dew is on thy feet—
Again appears the breaking morn—
Again thy lily body lies
All pallid, wasted and forlorn—
Again my soul with grief o'erworn
Within me dies!

O memory, break thy bitter wand!
O fancy, muffle up thy wings
And crouch within this gloomy hour,
Or waft me to the living springs
O'er which eternal glory flings
Its ceaseless shower!

There, have the splendors clasped thy soul,
My son! O ever-blessèd Faith,
That steps between us and despair,
And lights the very shades of death,
Lift up my spirit from the breath
Of this dark lair!

From life's dim, dusty solitude
I yearn, my child, to see thy face!
O, when this flickering pulse is dumb,
As I to thee said, "Go in Peace!"
By filial love and Jesus' grace,
To me say, "Come!"

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

With leather girdle round his loins
And vestment made of camel's hair,
His dark locks lifted by the wind,
His forehead brown, his bosom bare—
The mighty herald of the Lord
Upon the rocky hillside stands,
And o'er the sinful wilderness
He stretches forth his wasted haads.

"I am the voice of one who cries,
'Prepare the way through deserts drear!
Make straight the paths of God! for now
Heaven's kingdom surely draweth near!

Repent! Repent! for, lo! He comes!
By poet-prophet long foretold,
The Holy one whose sandal-strings
I am unworthy but to hold;
Whose fan is in His hand, and He
Will swiftly purge his threshing floor
And garner up the wheat, but burn
The chaff with fire, for evermore!"

The fountain gushes from the rock—
His words are as a fountain poured
Upon the heart that startled springs
And longs to leave its sins abhorred.
He moveth downward to the plain
With heart and soul on fire with love,
And sees a radiant shaft of light
Rebind the earth to heaven above.

He feels once more as when he leapt
For joy within his mother's womb,
What time lowly spotless maid,
More pure than dew on lily bloom,
Dear sole unstained humanity—
Came, with the mystery of heaven
All folded up in mortal weeds,
That mortal man might be forgiven.

For, with his eyes so calm and bright,
And with his soul a morning star
That ushers in the light supreme,

He sees the Savior from afar;
And hastening to the river's brink
With joy akin to seraphim,
Yet hid in deep humility
That deeper grows, the nearer Him.

He fills the hollow of his hand
From Jordan's sunlit wave, and, lo!
The ever-hallowed work is done—
The mighty work he came to do.
Now for the dungeon's waiting gloom,
Where soul and body they will sever,
And head from trunk—O, joy for him!
That he may reign a saint forever.

TO A LADY ON HER WEDDING DAY.

Dear lady, on this festive sixth of May,
Accept the greetings of a heart sincere,
That in its fullness knows not what to say,
Yet fain would breathe a kind word in thine ear.

O, may the union on this day begun
Be as a cedar—ever green and fair,
Whose roots strike deep in earth that it may rise
And kiss the blue of heaven's serenest air.

The roots of holy wedlock are in Time,
Its branches stretch into Eternity
And yield their fruit before the throne of God;
That the fruits please *Him*, is my prayer for thee

HAIL TO MY WILD WISCONSIN HOME.

Hail to my wild Wisconsin home!
By toil of brain or body won;
No more my heart desires to roam
To any land beneath the sun.

Beneath my lowly cottage roof
The mother to her baby sings;
Our ragged young ones, fashion-proof,
Are sheltered there by angels' wings.

These trees I planted long ago;
They now begin some fruit to yield,
Their blossoms scent the air in Spring,
And I have cleared and plowed that field.

My tax is paid, I nothing owe
Save kindness to my neighbors dear;
I worship in the light God gives,
And that same right in all revere

Hail to the state wherein we dwell!
Of equal rights for weak and strong,
Blest with the freedom to do well,
Cursed with no license to do wrong.

Hail to the judges who expound
The glorious laws by which we breathe
The breath of freemen, and abound
In what our God is pleased to give.

Hail to the chief to whom 't is given
By heaven, through the people's will,
To execute the sovereign law,
And say to passion, "Peace! Be still!"

Who prizes justice more than life,
And, like a shepherd, guards the fold
From foe without, within, from strife,
Of creeping snake or robber bold.

Hail to thee, Liberty divine!
From thee true earthly freedom springs;
O, fire the hearts that still are thine
To crush the despots—mobs or kings!

A MOTHER'S PLAINT.

Mother, dear! my son is dead;
Silent, cold and pale he lies,
Still he seems upon his bed,
Ever closed his thoughtful eyes,
Never answering to mine—
Mother dear, in grief I pine.

Thou hast known a mother's care,
Near thy heart a babe hath lain,
Thou hast smoothed his golden hair,
Sheltered him in sun and rain;
Thou hast fed him from thy breast—
Lulled him with low songs to rest.

Thou hast seen him die in pain,
Pierced by those he wished to save;
Thy pure heart, without a stain,
Sobbing, laid him in the grave.
Oh! I ought not to complain,
I who sinful am and vain.

Yet, O Virgin ever blest,
Pity my poor woman-heart;
As I wander sore oppress,
Let not strength and hope depart;
Lead my child thy Son to see,
Let him ask thy prayers for me.

WINTER.

Softly moves the noiseless snow
Through the gray and cheerless air,
Swinging, floating, here and there,
Undetermined where to go,
Like a creature void of care.
Filled with care and grief am I,
And I shall be till I die.

Earth is wrapped in robes of white,
Cold, and deaf, and dumb, she seems;
All forgot the summer gleams
Of her flowers in beauty bright,
And the music of her streams;
Soon within her dusky breast
Shall this fragile heart find rest.

Yet the trumpet of the spring
Shall awake her from her sleep;
Let her myriad pulses leap
And her myriad voices sing.
From a slumber still more deep,
Wakened by a voice divine,
Shall arise this earth of mine.

THE SOUL OF BURNS.

In that dear land, remembered and beloved,
That lies far east, beyond the heaving wave.
A child was born—the firstling of his sire—
Within a cottage built of clay,
When earth was cold and white with snow,
Near the "Auld Kirk of Alloway,"
A hundred years ago.

He lived, he loved, he sung—alas! he died;
Yet, though the cold earth's bosom keeps his dust,
His songs still breathe the old immortal fire—
The fire of love and patriot pride,
The fire to scorch hypocrisy,
The sympathy—warm, deep and wide,
The scorn of wrong and tyranny.

His soul, now free from stains of earth and time,
This very morning, on the day spring rose,
And looked once more upon that famous land—

That glorious land that gave him birth,
Where heather blooms, and fir-trees wave—
That land of song and honest worth,
Which Bruce and Wallace bled to save.

And, unencumbered by this mortal coil,
His rapid glance swept o'er, from sea to sea,
The hills and vales of Caledonia,
And saw, within that space so brief,
The light of many a name renowned—
Poet, philosopher and chief—
Whose fame has reached earth's utmost bound.

And, in the ancient cities of his land,
He saw his countrymen pass to and fro
In preparation for a festival.
He saw his own sons with a smile;
He marked the true, the gifted, all
Hastening with joy o'er many a mile
To keep his first centennial.

"Oh, Time!" he said, "Physician of all ills!
Impartial Judge! Avenger of all wrongs!
Slow Winnower, that parts the wheat and chaff!
Thy breath sweeps all the froth away,
But spares the true wine, clear and bright;
Thy footstep hides the worthless clay,
Thy hand lifts precious things to light.

"Forgive me, that when subject to thy reign,
I stooped to murmur at my low estate!

The gift of Poesy me heaven has shown—
Required no higher sphere than mine
To feel and see the heart of man,
And woman—love and beauty's shrine,
Or Nature's wondrous face to scan.

"Man's private, puny, grasping hand could ne'er
Enclose or hide the earth, or air, or sea,
With all their glooms and glories manifold;
The heart lies open to the poor,
And all its secrets poets tell,
Bring thoughts from heaven's starry floor,
And images from earth and hell.

"The pride of ancient and illustrious blood,
The mighty power of station and of gold,
Are weak and fleeting to that magic spell
The Poet casts upon the mind,
And earth would be without a bard
If man could *pay* for song and hymn—
True genius is its own reward!"

Across the Atlantic, then, he winged his flight,
And paused above the cities of the east;
And there, the greatest names of this great land—
Admirers of the Scottish muse—
In speech, and toast, and melody,
Were pouring forth their strains profuse,
In honor of his memory.

Did he remember then his years of toil?
His nights of sorrow, and his days of grief?
Or for his frailties the sharp-toothed regret?
O, no! they all had passed away,
And in their stead were peace and rest,
And sunshine of eternal day,
And hallowed joy among the blest.

Still further westward flew the soul of Burns;
Upon a rack of sunset clouds he came.
And lo! he stays above this gathering here!
He now rejoices in our mirth,
He listens to our harmless glee,
And quaffs a wine, not found on earth—
The wine of Immortality!

STORM-STAYED.

I.

Like countless mercies from the hand of God,
Noiseless and trembling fall the flakes of snow,
Clothed in such purity is all below,
It seems as if the earth had ne'er been trod.

Like a dead vestal beauteous Nature lies,
Her fire forgotten, and her music hid;
The gray oblivious air a coffin-lid
Through which the light essays to pierce, and dies.

Stainless and cold, as peerless chastity,
The virgin robe is wreathed in many folds
About her bosom, which, though withered, holds
The seeds of vernal immortality.

So have I seen a maiden of the Lord
Hide all her lovelinesses in their bloom,
Making her outward beauty but a tomb,
That she might nurse within the form adored.

II.

But now an angry spirit from the north
Drives the still snow into a level drift
That sweeps along, blinding, and strong, and swift
As if some fierce chief led his legions forth.

The stiffened forest trees must bend the head,
The huddling quail some covert now must take,
The poor man, and his slim-built shed, must shake,
The sifting snow will fall upon his bed.

But for that thought, what grandeur in the storm,
Rushing so wildly! Had it but the power
To spare the huts where wives and children cower
O'er scanty fires, that fail to keep them warm:

Then would I sing of thee, thou matchless snow,
A song of songs that would have power to charm;
Impassioned, as if to the milk-white arm
Of her I love, to whom I fain would go.

THE RAINBOW.

With wonders pregnant, the pure beams of light
Pour forth exhaustless from the god of day;
Then, swift as thought, through myriads of spheres,
Which rain-clouds scatter on the dusty earth,
The ever-glorious arch—looked at by God—
Is born, like love itself, 'mid smiles and tears!

Old as the flood, and yet forever young;
Unchanged and true, yet fresh as paradise;
From ancient Ararat, or this green turf,
Thou art the same dear token of the promise,
The same strange arc from God's own signet-ring,
As when a child I ran across the moor,
On scented thyme and purple heather bells,
To catch a handful of thy radiance!

O, Color! beauty dwells with thee for aye!
The loveliest line that Nature ever drew
Is but a beggar on thy skirts divine!
Thine are the spells that witch and win the world,
Thine are the mornings, and the burning clouds,
And the great sapphire vault, and the wide sea!
And thou dost clothe our earth with emerald,
And through our dear humanity doth speak
Of Him in whose own likeness we were made!

The universe in thee, deep and serene,
All folded up in mystic beauty, lies;

Light is thy god-head, and the triple dyes
Thy trinity; thy blessèd sacraments,
The seven rainbow tints; and on, and on,
Through spaces measureless of grey and gloom,
Until we reach where outer darkness dwells.

Great God! how truly happy is the soul
Who, from the point which thou hast meant, doth look
Upon the opulence of this bright world;
Placing in just and sweet relationships
The wondrous lovelinesses link by link,
Until they form a ladder up to Thee!
Who mounts sustained by grace, the shining steps,
His back to darkness turned, his face to light,
Yet calm and patient waits that certain hour
When he will see this beauty that he loves
Grow pale in that of which he never dreamed!

ANECDOTE OF PIUS IX.

Near Santiago, by the peaceful sea,
An exiled man was on his death-bed laid;
Wretched indeed, bereft of hope was he,
And none was near to give religious aid.
His wife, so near her widowhood, wept loud;
His children, well-nigh orphans, joined her cries;
The husband and the father's heart was bowed
Almost to breaking—when with kindly eyes,
A stranger entered that poor house of tears,

And soothed their grief, and by a gift from heaven,
Healed the poor sinner's soul, and calmed his fears,
Who felt and blest the mercy that was given.
The stranger's fingers closed the exile's eyes,
In his own linen wrapped the lifeless clay,
With his own hand scooped out his lowly grave,
And laid him there to wait the final day;
A wooden cross he planted at his head,
And let a wild rose at his feet take root.
That stranger now of Christendom is head,
And honored they who stoop to kiss his foot!

PETER'S THRONE.

[FROM THE ITALIAN.]

Meeting old Time the other day, I said,
"Where's Argos? Thebes? or Sidon? and where lie
The many noble piles of days gone by,
Built by the mighty ones?" He shook his head,
And nothing spoke, but showed me in his cell,
Ashes of robes, yet tinged with purple dye,
And bits of crowns, and armor piled up high,
And splints of shattered sceptres, mixed pell-mell.

I asked him then the fate of present things.
His all-destroying scythe around he plied,
And answered, "On my ever-moving wings
I bear the present where the past abide;
The empires of to-day, like those of old,
In dim oblivion their proud heads must hide!"

I asked again, "And does this stern decree
Apply to *Peter's Throne?*" Time gasped for breath,
And in his stead Eternity replied,
"The Throne of Peter knows nor time nor death!"

SONNETS.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE EVENING STAR.

I.

Sweet Star, that smilest on the parting day,
Why dost thou sail so near that sinking moon?
Thou art the Star of Love—Love's starry boon
To eyes whose love shall never know decay;
Those changeful horns now wax, now wane away,
And never for two nights remain the same;
Thy lamp, O, Hesper! burns with steady flame,
Like love that even 'mid pain and death will stay.
Ah! nearer still? alas! beloved of Eve!
That symbol of pale madness will eclipse
Thy light—as lovely faces with false lips,
That seem all fair on purpose to deceive,
Blot out the love by cold ingratitude,
Which would have been their own beatitude.

II.

Now thou art hidden; and this world of ours
Seems like the desert sky without thy ray;

Vain man has spurned the Good Supreme away,
And in its place he worships and devours
Himself. For in the loss of heavenly love,
True, simple human love must fade and die;
So heartless fickleness and madness lie
On hearts still true, as the cold moon above
The sweetest star of heaven: O, not forever!
Like a white lily, lifting into light
Its starry petals, sparkling pure and bright
Upon the heaving bosom of the river,
Love will shine forth to warm the world anew,
As thou, undarkened now, shinest in yonder blue!

STANZAS ON THE LOSS OF THE LADY ELGIN.

Heave as thou listest, sullen lake,
And roll thy muddy breakers on the shore!
For me thy beauty all is gone,
My loved ones from thy depths return no more.

Have mercy, Lord! far down I see
Those lips that I so oft have pressed to mine;
Those locks, my happy fingers smoothed,
Sway to and fro, like weeds, in ocean's brine.

Those eyes—ah! me, how faded now!
Their lamps are out, their spirit passed away;
And that cold, pallid, marble brow,
Dim through the twilight deep, is only clay.

O, leave, poor heart of mine, this sight!
O, leave this vision of the weltering deep,
Lest thou sink down, and cease to beat,
Thinking the waters can thy treasure's keep!

Up through the dawning of that morn,
Stormy for us upon this raft of Time—
They passed, on Mary's natal day,
The portals of that life which is sublime.

O, Consolator! Mother dear!
Thou that hast looked on His pale, bleeding head,
Thou that hast heard His last faint sigh,
Who died that he might lift us from the dead—

O, whisper "Mercy!" in his ear!
O, speak that little word with thy pure breath!
Mother of sorrows! hear! O, hear!
So that my loved ones may not sleep in death.

Jesus, our Brother, give them rest!
Jesus, our Savior, take them to thy peace!
Jesus, bind up our bleeding hearts!
Which but Thee must bleed till time shall cease.

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. J. V. HUNTINGTON.

I.

Pale, thought-worn wanderer from a foreign shore,
What seekest thou beside the Pyrenees?
Thy native land beyond the Atlantic's roar
Is grand, and fair, and sweet the western breeze,
Laden with perfume from the prairie flowers,
And from the shadowy forest's silent bowers.

Doth ruby wine-cup, festal song or dance,
Lure thee so far towards these mountains' feet?
Lovest thou the genial breath of sunny France?
Doth youthful joy and poesy still beat
Within thy veins, as when thou cam'st of yore
To Europe, and enriched thee from her lore!

Or is it that the grim and frantic hand
Of red-eyed slaughter, smeared with brother's blood,
Hangs dripping o'er thy once great happy land,
Feeding the gloomy Dragon's hungry brood?
Was't this that struck thy heart and exiled thee,
Because thy country is not *one* and *free?*

Perchance in part this last. But I perceive
Thy graceful locks are thin on thy veined brow;
Thine eyes are hollow, and their shadows weave
A dim veil o'er the fire that fades below;
These temple walls, too finely formed for time,
Require a purer air—a brighter clime.

II.

The pilgrim laid him down to rest his limbs,
  The roads are rugged still for such as he;
The storms are darker, though the light beyond
  Is brighter far than duller eyes may see;
The angel of his life beside him kneels,
Ah! let me not imagine what *she* feels.

The peace of Jesus seals his heavy eyes,
  And lifts his gifted spirit on its wings
Through mists of earth and clouds of many dyes,
  Afar, through unimaginable things,
Where mortal Fancy's feet have never trod,
And laid him in the bosom of his God!

And shall this bright transition make us mourn
  The prisoner freed from the fetters of the clay?
This gentle passage made across the bourne,
  This change from twilight to eternal day?
Alas! the cypress in our garden grows,
And human breath is drawn through human woes.

Death still is death to the poor beating heart,
  And changes all things 'round us. Let us weep!
Yet bring the flowers, ere summer all depart,
  And strew them gratefully above his sleep!
The rose of love, the lily, fair to see,
The scented thyme, and mystic "Rosemarie."

THECLA.

Where the rocks with sombre shadows
Overhang the sparkling stream,
And the pine trees spread their branches,
Ever fragrant, ever green,
Thecla oped her eyes of azure,
Wondering, as in a dream,
What the tones of happy voices
And the gleams of light could mean.

On her head the wave baptismal,
Freeing her from sinful stain,
Duly flowed from hand anointed,
And she took her place among
Pilgrims of the Cross, who journey
Through the twilight and the rain
To the everlasting dwelling
Where immortal souls belong.

Ruder sounds have not come near her
Than the plaint of mourning doves,
Or the crystal fountain singing
As it gushes o'er the stones,
Or the songsters of the forest
Warbling forth their guileless loves,
Bleat of lambs or wild bee's humming,
Or affection's gentle tones.

Earth hath made her destined circuit
Twice around the central fire
Since the infant came to bless us;
Now the music of her voice,
As she speaks the name of "Jesus,"
Lifts our aspirations higher
Far than aught of earthly treasure,
Makes our inmost souls rejoice.

Or sweet Mother of Our Savior,
Shield her through the storms of time!
We are frail, but thou art mighty,
Keep her innocent and holy,
Keep her soul from sin's dark wound,
Till she reach the radiant clime
Where, with thee and sainted Thecla,
Light and peace and love are found.

A SOLDIER'S FUNERAL.

This good November day is nearly o'er;
The sun is gone, and yet his glory fills
With a divine effulgence all the west,
And pours a yellow gleam across these hills.
Full many a new-made, grassless grave is here,
And many a group of mourners scattered 'round,
Each wishing that his sorrow may outlive
Whatever joy may on the earth be found.

Another tent within this silent camp
Must rise for thy long-lost remains. O, grief!
Here the poor remnant of thy band awaits
To do the last sad office for their chief.
The jewels of thy house, in mourning set,
Stand weeping near thine ashes; and I see
Some others that still love thee with a love
That stretches further than this boundary.

To bless thy body in its narrow house,
A Soldier of the Cross, old, tried and good,
Is here to bid thee rest in peace and hope
Beneath the shelter of the Holyrood.
Death is not death beside this Tree of Life!
A dark-robed angel sent from heaven is he,
Who, with a frowning look to those around,
Strikes off the chains and sets the captive free.

And there thy gallant brethren of the sword
Steady and calm, though not unmoved at heart,
Send their close volleys o'er thy honored dust—
A soldier's knell, at which the echoes start,
Three more, my men! "Make ready," "aim," and "fire!"
Another of the fated "Guards" lies down
To rest this night, and keep thee company,
'Mong drifted Autumn leaves, all seared and brown.

Farewell! Along the forests and the hills
The doubly thrice-awakened echoes die;

Twilight is spreading o'er us its dim veil,
Like this dim veil of life 'neath which we lie;
The stars, emerging from the depths of space,
Seem to rebuke us that we weep or smile
At anything this shifting world affords—
Dear friend, I leave, and say, "Farewell, awhile!"

DEAR WILDING ROSE.

Dear wilding rose, whose blossoms grace
The smiling, blue-eyed peasant girls!
A crimson garland for the neck,
Or crown among the sunny curls.

Beloved by beauty, sorrow, joy,
And by the glances of the morn;
By children and the pure beloved,
By poets sung since time was born.

Long, long ago, that man might live,
The wheat and grape and oil were given;
E en then thy blushing bosom glowed
Beneath the bounteous smile of Heaven.

What tongue can tell thy loveliness,
So simple, yet so passing fair?
Springing wherever man should dwell
To scatter sweetness on the air.

In vain is study spent, and time,
The clumsy-budded garden-rose
Thy matchless beauty ne'er can reach,
For all the culture man bestows.

As lady with her costly dress
To lithe young virgin, full of love—
As pigeon, over-fed, beside
The sweetly perfect mourning dove—

So is thy beauty. peerless flower!
And after death thy fragrance rare,
Like odor round the sainted dead,
Turns earthly to celestial air.

O Rose of Love, why art thou loved,
Since neither food nor dress thou bring'st?
Nor shelter from the rain or heat,
Nor song among the dew thou sing'st?

Ah! shall I tell thee, gentle one,
That thou may'st love the flower the more?
Then look upon its crimson breast,
And 'gainst the harsh world shut the door!

What light within its centre glows!
And 'round, five mystic petals bloom
To symbolize the blessêd wounds
Which brought our Savior to the tomb.

For, ere the star of day was made,
It was foreknown that Christ would bleed
For guilty man; even then the rose
Within God's mind was thought indeed;

That things upon this wondrous earth,
The life, the death, the bread, the wine,
The flowers, and all, should symbolize
And correspond to things divine.

Henceforth, till light shall fail mine eyes,
Whene'er I look upon a rose
I'll think on thee, my bleeding Lord,
And in Thy wounds seek true repose.

ST. MARY'S OF THE PINES.

Dear retreat for mortal wearied
With turmoil,
Take me to your sheltering bosom!
Soothe my brain with nature's gladness,
Pour the balm and wine and oil!
Dull routine my life has wounded
Nigh to sadness;
Give me in your wildernesses
Change of toil!

And ye springs that gush and sparkle
As you pour

From your never-failing fountains,
From your dark, mysterious prison,
Swelling still the streamlet's store;
Laughing to the light of morning
Newly risen,
Let me join with your sweet murmurs
One voice more.

From the unseen came I also,
By the might
Of the Eternal Fount of Being,
Through the darksome ways of error,
Far more dismal than the night
Of your hidden stony barriers;
From that terror
By the hand of mercy lifted
Into light.

Streamlet—daughter of a thousand
Limpid springs!
On thou speedest like an angel
With a healing benediction
Folded underneath his wings;
Warbling sweetest as thou meetest
Contradiction
From rude stones on which the lichen
Feeds and clings.

Oh, that I could scatter blessing
Like to thee!

That my soul could mirror beauty
As thy bosom's liquid crystal!
That my songs might be as free,
Varied, lasting as thy singing!
Then should list all
Mortals to my strain—a minstrel
I should be.

Pines, that heal the air with perfume,
Towering high,
Decked with cones for jewels, pendant
In your green immortal vesture,
Though your heads are in the sky,
Yet, like mortal man beneath you,
You must rest your
Feet upon the solid fabric,
Or must die.

Lend my verse the balsam odor
Of your tears!
And the color of your needles,
And the heavenward direction
Of your stems, which rise like spears,
That my song may still point upward
From dejection
And the basis of the earthly
To the spheres!

Rocks, that Time has worn to grandeur
With his breath!

Steadfast as a righteous canon,
High above the vanished ages,
Moveless 'mid surrounding death;
How your silence and your shadows
Shame my pages!
Doomed to crumble, as the leaves
My feet beneath.

Little chapel, rude and lonely
To the eye,
How thy white cross in the sunlight
Gleams, and prompts a prayer in whispers!
Shall my mouldering ashes lie
Blest and near thee, though unheeding
Song of Vespers,
Or the Kyrie Eleison's
Plaintive cry?

Gorge of beauty, sweetly nestled
'Mong the hills;
Far removed from sordid traffic,
Filled with springs forever weeping
Through the rocks in mossy rills—
Shall my lowly memory linger
In thy keeping,
When this heart which now is throbbing
Silence fills?

Yes; a little while my footsteps
May be known;

And the hearts that I have cherished
Will remember me in yonder
Sacred symbol in the stone!
They will say, "His hand engraved it!"
And with fonder
Accents of affection whisper,
"He is gone!"

"Gone! above this transient vision
Of a day;
Upward springing through the azure,
Upward to the Source of Beauty,
From the strife of sin and clay,
Soared his spirit to Our Savior,
As the levin
Through the clouds of storm and darkness
Cleaves its way."

AUTUMN.

Autumn slowly steals upon us;
Over hills and vales and streams
Green is turned to gold and crimson,
And the landscape seems like dreams
Filled with drowsy mists and vagueness,
Chequered by the richest gleams.

Swiftly, slowly, never pausing,
How the gorgeous vision sweeps

All the chords and tones of color
From the green and purple deeps
To the palest flame that, lamp-like,
Trembles on the rocky steeps.

Soon the leaves their blush and paleness
Will exchange for faded brown,
Like the habit of Saint Francis;
And the gemmed and starry crown
Of Queen Nature—Indian Summer
In its smoky haze will drown.

Like the Scottish soldier flinging
Ere the fight his plaid aside,
Soon the trees will shed their foliage,
Winter's stormy blasts to bide;
And beneath a cheerless mantle
Earth her priceless treasures hide.

Autumn slowly steals upon us,
Spring-tide visions fade away;
O'er our brains and through our bosoms
Floats the dim and dusky gray
Of the twilight and the evening—
'Tis the hour to rest and pray.

MORNINGS.

When I rise to meet my love,
  As the waning lamps of night
  Fade before the orient light,
Then my soul is like a dove
As I rise to meet my love.

All the universe is calm,
  And the fountains of the day
  O'er the depths of azure play,
Sprinkling gold and pearl and balm,
And the silence is a psalm.

Holy mornings, from my soul
  Never, never fade away,
  Till this hand is mouldering clay,
Till its mover reach the goal
And my love shall clasp my soul!

TO SISTER H———.

Within our loved Redeemer's heart
  Dear Sister, please remember me;
In my poor prayers, where'er thou art,
  Thy name will not forgotten be.
When far away from friends and home
  God still is near; may He sustain

The soul which thou hast given to Him,
And mine—that we may meet again.
May meet, when time and death are past,
And in the radiant fields above
Behold where sorrow, trial, faith,
And hope, are swallowed up in love.

PROVIDENCE.

A careful shepherd, when he feeds his sheep
In winter, when the frost is in the air
And all the yard with snow is covered deep,
Watches to see if weak ones get their share.

The strong ones crowd around the narrow trough,
And greedily devour till all is spent,
While some young timid ewe has not enough,
And runs about and bleats, not well content.

Apart from all the rest the shepherd leads
And feeds her from his hand with kindly mien;
She knows him, and all silently she feeds,
By all the greedy, jostling ones unseen.

So in the holy providence of God
The weak and bashful have their portion, too,
By ways unthought of or misunderstood
By the world's noisy, avaricious crew.

He from the heaven of heavens beholds the men
Who fain would take the fields, the streams, the air
And keep them for themselves; His searching ken
Has every heart and every purpose bare.

And, haply, when an upright soul He sees,
Shy and unselfish, leads her in His love
By crystal streams and ever fruitful trees,
Where hums the honey-bee and coos the dove.

CONTENTMENT.

Beside my brook, 'neath cloudless skies
The crested halcyon builds her nest;
The mottled thrush pours forth his song,
My ever-welcome summer guest.

Beside my brook the honey-bees
From purest choice have come to dwell;
They feed upon the linden-trees
Whose fragrant blossoms scent the dell.

Beside my brook such roses bloom,
From deepest crimson up to white,
As would be beautiful in heaven,
And give to angels even delight.

Encircled by the rocky hills,
Removed afar from worldly strife,
So hidden, and so calm and fair,
The place was formed for love and life.

For love of God, and all that springs
From His allwise, almighty love,
For life, to mount on spirit wings
From these bright things to things above.

The budding branches of my vines
To trellises of oak I bind
With strings of inner bark, and watch
The sweet unfolding of each kind.

I prune my trees, I train my flowers,
I trace the shadows how they fall,
Buds are my calendar—my clock
The sunshine on the chapel wall.

What more can I desire on earth
Than this dear pathway up to God?
Adieu, wild, wasteful world! My feet
Find what they seek on this green sod.

Beside my brook whoever breathes
May feel the truth of this my verse;
Only the soul that loves can see
The beauty of the universe.

A VOICE FROM PURGATORY.

The light of mortal life has faded,
The earth has passed away,
The raven-plume of death has shaded

The lamps of night and day.
Dim twilight here surrounds us solely,
We yearn, we faint, we pine
To tread that shore so bright and holy,
To see our Lord Divine!

Like stars the angels hover o'er us,
And watch on silent wing
The ray divine sent to restore us,
Then down they sweep and sing,—
They sing, they take the pure from near us,
But us, alas! they leave,
As if they neither see nor hear us,
And yet we sob and grieve.

Ah! when shall we be freed from sorrow?
This pain of hope—this stain?
O, when shall dawn on us that morrow,
Ne'er, ne'er to fade again?
If friends on earth could hear our sighing,
And see our streaming eyes,
And feel this hope which seems like dying,
More prayers for us would rise!

WHEN I THE LIGHT SHALL LEAVE.

When I the light shall leave
Of earth's pale shore,
When life's swift shuttles weave

This web of life no more—
Where shall I go? O, where?
Shall I to bliss repair,
Or night, and blank despair,
And hopeless woe?

Shall I change then for aye—
The heaven's blue,
Green field, and blithesome day,
And every hue
That spring and summer's sun
Makes, and then smiles upon—
For some dim place where none
Loves what is true?

Ah! when I pass from earth,
And earth's delight;
When all my pretty ones
Fade from my sight,
Shall no sweet thought sustain
My soul in that dire pain,
That we shall meet again
In love and light?

O, Jesus! Thou hast breathed
Our mortal air;
The grass was green to thee,
The lily fair;
And Thou dost love as none
Can do, or e'er has done;

All things beneath the sun
  Are still Thy care.

The bitterness of death
  Was also Thine;
Unfathomable love,
  O, Lord Divine!
What thou hast made, O keep!
From that mysterious sleep
Let me not wake to weep,
  Dear Saviour mine!

SLEEP AND DEATH.

Death and his brother, Sleep,
  Moved o'er the wide world hand in hand,
And as they passed a shade of sadness deep
  Fell on the sea and land.

The village bell was mute,
  The bird had sunk into her grassy nest,
The stiff and wearied limbs of man and brute
  Welcomed the hour of rest.

The moon, with arms milk white,
  Clasped the dim ghost of what she once had been,
The stars, in their lone atmospheres of light,
  Were silent and serene.

The dream-eyed angel, Sleep,
Strews with his noiseless hand the mystic balm;
On hearts that sigh and ache, on eyes that weep,
It falls, a healing calm.

It wraps the cradled child,
The loving mother, and the thoughtful sire;
The sick forget their pain; of care beguiled
All peacefully respire.

"My daily task is done,"
The angel said; "O, serious brother Death,
When morning breaks, and the all-glorious sun
Shall kindle with his breath

"The mountains and the plains,
Then living music, filled with hope and love
From strengthened hearts that have forgot their pains
Shall rise to God above.

"How they will thank me then!
What joy is ours, twin messenger of heaven,
To do such good unseen to mortal men!
What peace we two have given!"

In Death's dark eye there stood
A melancholy and mysterious tear;
"Ah, brother, would that I could share thy mood!
Men *thee* court; *me* they fear!

"They call me 'enemy,'
'Disturber' and 'destroyer of their gladness';
My presence casts a gloom on every eye,
On every heart a sadness.

"Something I, too, have done.
To wearied souls I've given supreme repose—
A surer balm than slumber ever won
For human griefs and woes.

"And yet, small thanks are mine—
The living mourn, and shun me while they can;
The highest teachers, as of old, must pine
Without reward from man!"

The angel Sleep replied,
"O brother, when the eternal morn shall break,
Will not all good men thank thee that they died,
When they to bliss awake?

"'Tis I who should repine,
Who work but for the day and have its praise;
To labor for eternity is thine,
A saint in all thy ways!"

THE SOUL'S CROSS.

My heart is sad, but not with sullen sadness
Or hopeless gloom;
And yet a grief not to be changed to gladness
This side the tomb.

Sometimes the spirits of the bravest droop
In life's long fight,
To see how vain their labor, and yet know
Their aim was right.

A crimson rose and lily purest white
Bloomed side by side
Within a sheltered garden near a stream's
Pellucid tide.

I thought my friend would praise them, but alas!
He heeded not,
But turned to things not precious to the soul
And soon to rot.

The truth and beauty which we see with joy
And fain would show,
But, chilled and saddened, turn our hearts from hearts
That never glow;

The efforts that we make those wounds to close
That will not heal,
And all the feeling that we spend on those
Who do not feel—

Depress us with a shy and voiceless sorrow
That prompts our pride
A smile of unconcern to vainly borrow,
Defeat to hide.

O, sad physician! seeing deadly sores,
Those fain wouldst heal,
And holding in thy hand the sovereign balm
For mortal weal!

Yet still must hear thy patients scoff at thee
And turn away
To try and dream that they are sound and well,
And free and gay!

This is the crucifixion of the soul,
Which makest groan
Unheard the chosen priesthood of the world—
Apart, alone.

They suffer for the sins of other men
Without complaint;
O, brave and blessèd ones who see such woe
And do not faint!

Still "suffer on in silence," for by this
The vassal grows
More like the Master, which is better far
Than what are now called gladness and repose.

THE TWO RAVENS.

A LEGEND FOR CHRISTMAS.

PART I.

The story of a hermit old
I here relate in modest rhyme,
And give it just as it was told—
A legend of the *olden tyme*.

This hermit was a holy man,
His eye was calm, his beard was white;
He knew that life was but a span—
A chequered dream of dark and bright.

He left the busy haunts of men,
With pilgrim staff and sandal shoon;
He traveled over mount and glen,
Beneath the light of sun and moon.

The pleasant ways of life he left,
And many friends, who loved him well,
But thought he was of sense bereft,
To leave them so, alone to dwell.

The great, broad, fertile valley, too,
The luscious fruit, the glistening corn—
The bounteous stream that glided through
And caught the tints of even and morn—

The bright-eyed children on its banks,
  The purple vats, and all, he left,
And clomb this hill to offer thanks
  Within a rocky thunder cleft.

Strange! with this loving gift of speech,
  This human language all our own,
There could be found within the reach
  Of men, a man to live alone!

Yet here a spring as clear as glass
  Pulsated, like a beating heart,
Out of the stubborn rock, and grass
  Grew in its course for hind and hart.

And here a cavern in the stone—
  Fire-proof, and proof 'gainst sun and rain,
With rude-formed ledge to sit upon,
  Looked out upon the distant plain.

This was his chapel and his bed;
  He knelt upon the flinty floor,
He laid on it his aged head,
  With but a few leaves sprinkled o'er.

Close by, two ravens with him dwelt,
  And every day they went, and came
Again before the dews were felt,
  Or sunset dyed the peak with flame.

Far down the lengthening valley rose
The village spire, like shaft of light,
Against the azure hills that lose
Their outlines to the lagging sight.

Twice every month a pious youth
Did from the village come with bread,
And learned some lesson of deep truth,
The which he carried back instead.

And many a one oppressed with grief
Would make a pilgrimage to hear
The hermit's words, that brought relief,
That soothed the heart and dried the tear.

In such sweet offices of love
He might have passed the days remaining,
Blest by the dews of heaven above,
His soul no sinful traffic staining;

But from the haunts of sloth arrived
Two villains, from the ancient stock,
Who thought some rich eccentric lived
With treasure hidden in the rock.

He made them welcome to his cell,
With a slight tremor at his heart—
He knew not why, nor can I tell,
But near the wolf the lamb will start.

He turned to bring the loaf of bread;
His wearied guests must eat and rest;
The day is well nigh done, and red
The sun is sinking in the west.

Just as he turned, a flash of light
Gleamed from a dagger lifted high;
They stabbed him in the neck, and night
Drew her thick curtain o'er his eye.

With hands crossed on his breast, he fell
To rise no more; but yet he tried
His long loved Master's name to tell,
And hers who bore him, ere he died.

"Jesu! Maria!" from his tongue
Trembled upon the caverned air.
The tones were gathered up and flung
Back from the rocks, and struck them there
With fear, and horror, and despair!

Ah, me? to strike a white-haired man,
Whose knees were calloused with long prayer—
Whose feeble steps and fingers wan
Reached forth to feed them in his care.

To spill his blood for doubtful gold—
Surely their mothers never kissed
Their brows in youth, nor fathers told
Good tales on Christmas nights, I wist!

But dear to him that ruthless stroke,
It set his prisoned spirit free,
And doubtless on his vision broke
The sweet day of eternity.

Not so with them; they knew not where
To hide, and, stepping by the well,
Stooped down to cool their lips; but there
Each mirrored face a tale did tell.

For in the water, veins of blood
Stole slowly through like crimson threads
Across each pictured throat—Great God!
Like bodies severed from their heads;

And sore aghast they turned away,
For them the purest spring was cursed
That ever flung its glittering spray,
Or in a mountain's womb was nursed.

But yet they looked for hoarded wealth,
Through all the corners of the cave;
Although alone, they moved with stealth,
Through silence, silent as the grave.

And naught they found—Oh! double curse!
Not even the poor reward of guilt—
A casket rare, or heavy purse—
But souls stained as their dagger's hilt.

Down through the twilight woods they go;
The rotten branches 'neath their tread
Make startling noises, and the low
Dull wind seems mourning for the dead.

PART II.

Day dawns, and in the opal light,
The star—the Baptist of the morn—
Is fading from the watcher's sight;
The evil-shielding night is torn.

High up above the slumbering pines,
Whose tops but seemed like meadow weeds,
The earliest gleam of morning shines
Upon the hermit and his beads

Their sable wings the ravens plume,
And put their uncouth heads aside
To listen through the scattered gloom,
The accustomed song at morning tide—

With which the eremite began
Each day that through time's sand-glass passed;
He knew that life was but a span,
A chequered dream which could not last.

It was a healthful song, indeed,
But he must sing it here no more;
For us there still remains the need
To say one like it, o'er and o'er.

For I myself have heard the strain
He sung, and learned it as you see,
That I might tell it o'er again,
And here I tell it unto thee:

HERMIT'S SONG.

"Now with the rising golden dawn,
Let us, the children of the day,
Cast off the darkness which so long
Has led our guilty souls astray.

"Oh, may the morn, so pure, so clear,
Its own sweet calm in us instil;
A guileless mind, a heart sincere,
Simplicity of word and will.

"And ever as the day glides by,
May we the busy senses rein;
Keep guard upon the hand and eye,
Nor let the body suffer stain.

"For all day long, on Heaven's high tower,
There stands a Sentinel, who spies
Our every action, hour by hour,
From early dawn till daylight dies."

They listen, but no sound ascends,
In silence sleeps the sunken vale,
And the great sweeping river bends
Unheard, its shining silver trail.

They sit and listen, but no sound,
Save from the tiny rill that leaps
O'er rocky shelves with many a bound,
Then, tired, through the soft moss-bed weeps.

At last they jump from off the nest
To where the Solitary lay,
And wonder at his moveless rest
That breaks not with the break of day.

They dip into the blood, and lo!
They lift to heaven their clotted beaks,
With wings out-spread and eyes aglow,
Like coals of fire—draw back their necks—

And shuddering like to injured men
When vengeance leaps within their hearts,
Shot up into the air, and then
With one wild scream flew down the glen!

Nor once alit, till on the roof
Of a low hostelry that stood
Suspicious like, too far aloof
And idle to be there for good.

And there they sat above the door,
Two murky figures, croaking hoarse,
As dismal as the "Nevermore"
Of Edgar's raven of remorse.

Upon the steps a small red stain,
By them or by the ruffians brought,
Brought forth suspicion; it was plain
The ravens were not there for naught,

For when the guilty men essayed
To leave the dwelling, they would fly
Above their heads, and people said
That these two men were doomed to die.

And so it proved, for soon was found
The body of the hermit old,
At sight of which the wretches swooned,
Then all the frightful story told.

Condemned to death by God's own law,
No mawkish sympathy with crime
Proved them insane, or raised a purse
To compensate them for lost time.

Confessed their guilt, and strove to make
Their peace with him who loveth peace,
And pardoned were for Jesus' sake,
Whose blessed reign shall never cease.

Whose blessed visit long ago—
Renewed upon this joyful day—
Can staunch the stream of human woe
Till earth and time shall pass away!

A HOMESICK RHYME.

I long for the murmuring streamlet
That mirrors the ever-green pines,
Where the low purple primrose is nestling
Near the cliff where the sun seldom shines.
And to walk through the rude little vineyard
That dips to the dawning of day,
Where the thrush and the robin are chanting,
And the buds are as beauteous as they.

I long for the fountain that gushes
So clear and so cool near the door,
And the woods so majestic and silent,
And the precipice, sombre and hoar;
In fancy the mother Theresa
I see, sitting drooping and pale,
As her needle as swift as a shuttle
She throws through an alb or a veil.

I long for my artist son Charles,
Who gazes on Nature's sweet face;
He snatches her secret of beauty,
Her glow and her gloom and her grace;

And a glimpse of his face who has left us
To be nearer the Crucified One,
Would enliven my weary old spirits
That to waver and sink have begun.

I long for my farmer and shepherd—
My James, with his flute on the rock;
He pipes to his lambs on the hillside,
And he knows every face in his flock;
And to see my enthusiast, Wilfrid,
With his chisels and crosses and rhymes;
Who knows every leaf in the forest,
And can puzzle his papa ten times.

I long for my golden-haired Andrew,
Who sings like a linnet all day,
He is kind to his sweet little sister,
And he likes to be modeling in clay.
I long for my dear little Thecla,
The angel that hallows our home,
The flower that sprang in the desert
Afar from the spire and the dome.

Her skin is as fair as the lilies
That bloom on the bosom of May,
Her cheeks and her lips like the roses,
And her soul is more lovely than they;
Her hair is a cluster of beauty,
Her eyes they are bonny and blue,
Her voice is the song of a spring bird,
And her heart is both tender and true.

I sigh—Oh, great Giver, forgive me!
It is but a moment I mourn,
As I think on the ones Thou hast taken,
And who never to earth can return.
O, blessed forever the bounty
That gives, and the love that bereaves,
And happy in joy and in sorrow
Is the soul that still loves and believes.

THE TWO WOMEN.

A BALLAD.

PART I.

Come little girls with lustrous eyes,
Brighter than those of the gazelle,
And hear this old, this ever new,
This wondrous tale I tell!

'Tis partly of a lady fair,
With rosy lips and teeth of pearl,
Who was a wife, a mother too,
But never was a girl!

Come! gather round me on the grass,
You sweetly folded buds of Spring!
Make parasols of linden leaves,
And listen while I sing!

Come, modest Virgins! on this green
And flowery lawn your forms recline,
Beside your younger sisters now,
And hear this tale divine!

'Tis partly of a lady fair,
With regal crimson in her veins,
A wife, a mother blest, and yet
A Virgin still remains!

How beautiful you are! how meek
And lovely are your downcast eyes!
The drooping lid, the liquid shade,
Like cloud o'er summer skies.

The rose and lily on your cheeks
Are sweetly blended, fair to see,
As on your lips the winning smile
Of love in purity.

Yet she was fairer far than you;
The roses pale, the lilies fade,
And beauty's self is dim beside
This noblest, humblest maid.

Come, mothers, let your children play
And gather wild flowers 'round us here,
How quickly through the last soft shower
The bursting buds appear!

But some are weeping—ah, poor heart!
The beautiful have sunk to sleep
And may not wake to share your joy,
No wonder that you weep.

The most illustrious mothers wept
Like you to see their children slain,
The sinful and the sinless weep,
And love is mixed with pain.

Yet bind up your neglected hair,
And dry your eyes and smile once more!
See now! like flowers through dew you look
Far lovelier than before.

Come, sober widow, lonely left,
Like constant mateless mourning dove;
The grave has taken strength and stay,
But could not take thy love.

The brightest, holiest of thy sex,
A weeping widow, too, was she,
I bow before the added grace
Which sorrow gives to thee!

Come, Magdalena! shame on him
Whose selfish heart contrived thy shame,
Then left thee to the pelting storm
Of doubly bitter blame!

The stainless one shall take thy hand
And lift thee up where thou shalt give
Lost innocence for love divine—
A better life to live.

No ballad singing minstrel yet
Such varied beauty e'er has seen,
As now before my dazzled eyes
Lies on this fragrant green.

I cannot sing for savage man,
So busy shedding blood for gold;
For gold he'd lade the ocean dry,
For gold, be bought and sold.

Still let him plot, and grasp, and crush,
And hoard, and strut, and cheat, and lie,
He has no ear for sacred song,
And songless let him die.

Yours is the holy task of love,
For on your lap and by your knees
The priceless and immortal life
Unfolds by sweet degrees.

How dear to watch the opening flower,
To gently bend the tender spray!
And keep the spiders that devour
And canker worms away!

How sweet to lead the crystal spring
That gushes sparkling from the ground,
Through vineyard rare, or grassy fields,
In verdant mazes 'round!

Which else, in snaky marsh or fen,
Had strayed, and lost itself, and died;
Now, like a sprightly docile fawn,
It toddles by your side.

How dear to see the dawning light
Faint on the heavenly islands play,
When gleaming o'er the Eastern hills,
The promise of the perfect day.

But sweeter far a human heart
To nurse and tend, inspire and shield!
O, dearer far a soul divine
Beneath a mother's eye revealed.

To sing the songs of other days,
That touch the heart and dim the eyes;
To teach the prayer and hymn of praise,
That lift the young soul to the skies,

The angels well might envy you,
If envy could such beings move;
But that their own enraptured toil
Fulfills the same Almighty love.

The young bird in its mossy nest
  Holds up its head and cries for food,
The flower its golden chalice rears,
  And is with lighted gems bedewed.

This new immortal flower of God
  Expands to drink the light and dew;
This wingless bird of Heaven pleads
  For wings of love and thought from you.

And as when country maiden feeds
  The peeping chickens at the door,
She crumbles fine the lumps of bread,
  The anxious mother breaks them more:

So I for little children sing,
  In language lowly, simple, wise,
That you, O, chosen ones, may show
  More sweetly where the wisdom lies.

Look 'round and see these violets bloom,
  Look up and love the summer sky,
And listen to the warbling thrush
  On yonder elm that towers so high!

Then think—*there was a time when these*
  And all the beauty that you see
Of color, shape or sound were not—
  Then list a little while to me!

PART II.

Far in the unknown depths of time,
  Unheeded save by God alone,
This earth in dismal darkness whirled,
  A fiery bulk of molten stone.

The huge, fierce-hissing, lonely lump
  God out of empty nothing made,
And sowed its womb with seeds of law
  To be a world of light and shade.

Long, long it writhed, a seething mass
  Of fire, all formless and inane,
Without a bird, or tree, or flower,
  Or azure sky or singing rain.

How many millions of our years
  Were spent to cool its scorchèd breast,
God has not told, man cannot know,
  Nor knowing would he be more blest.

A day is as a thousand years,
  A thousand years are as a day
To God—whose name be ever praised,
  But we are creatures closed in clay.

At length a dim, uncertain light,
  Like early dawn of misty morn,
Suffuses through the steaming space—
  The tortured ball looks less forlorn.

Slowly the arching firmament
Arises o'er the glimmering seas;
The swarthy, naked land uprears
Its ridges to the stifling breeze.

Slowly, beneath the shallow brine,
To live the low, dull seaweed tries;
Upon the margin of the deep
The frog-pipes and coarse weeds arise.

Slowly the nameless growths arose;
Gigantic ferns their fans unfurled
Like palm trees; and great trunks that form
The coal-fields of the nether world.

A vegetation rank and pale,
Weird-like and shadowless and gray,
Springs up and falls, and springs again
While countless ages melt away.

More light! More light! through vapor dim
A rounded disc in crimson dressed
Describes an arch through mighty space
Then disappears in ocean's breast—

Leaving a gloom before unknown,
Something like night o'er sea and shore,
As lightning lightens up the cloud,
And leaves it darker than before.

Perhaps it was the glorious sun
That made that day and left that night,
But not a human eye beheld
Or watched his coming with delight.

Again, again, and brighter now
The maker of the arches springs
Unwearied from the undefined
And dubious verge of earthly things.

Clearer and deeper, in his smile
The air becomes a heavenly blue,
And as he sinks a curve of fire
Pierces the deepening darkness through.

Perhaps it was the pallid moon
That beamed upon the lifeless sea;
The lamp that lights the lover's eye,
That shone last night on you and me.

And things of living silver sheen
Burn brightly in the hollow gloom,
"Like good deeds in a naughty world," *
Or angels round a tomb.

Sun, moon and stars now cheer the earth,
The wide, luxuriant landscape smiles;
The Parent of all beauty paints
With splendors continents and isles.

* "So shines a good deed in this naughty world."—SHAKSPEARE.

The trees are green, the skies are blue,
The clouds in golden robes are dressed,
And all the tints of earth and air
Are mirrored in old Ocean's breast;

And creatures strange, with beating hearts
Now live and roam the waters deep;
Great warlike fishes chase and kill
The weaker ones the shallows keep.

They on each other prey—like men,
And brutal nations of to-day,
That seize and hold their neighbors lands,
And peace and justice drive away.

Yet those are blameless; God them made
Sea pirates clad in plated mail
To do His will, unconsciously,
With bony tooth and fin and scale.

Well armed with long and ragged jaws,
Fierce reptiles in the hot lagoons
Trail their grim bodies through the slime,
And wallow through the lazy noons;

And dreadful dragons lived and flapped
Against the light their hideous wings;
And uncouth monsters now unknown,
And serpents coiled in glittering rings
With poison fangs and fiery stings;

And frightful earthquakes oft convulsed
And tore the bowels of the world,
And bellowing to the blotted moon,
The yawning crocodile was hurled,

In drifted leagues of mud and sand,
With crackling spine and stifled groan,
Entombed within the liquid mass,
And turned to stone in hills of stone.

More wonderful than these God made—
Great birds, which now we see no more,
To rise on wings and live in air,
Or wade along the shallow shore;

And eagles, condors, vultures fierce,
That watch upon the cedar peaks
To swoop and tear their quivering prey
With horny claws and crooked beaks.

Bright creatures clad in gorgeous plumes
Of crimson, azure, green and gold,
Sat in the boughs secure, above
The hooded snake and gavial bold;

And sober-coated birds of song—
The thrush, the linnet and the dove—
The prime musicians of the earth,
The types of innocence and love.

But still more wonderful than these,
God makes the mammals—them that feed
With nice warm milk their nuzzling young,
Various in beauty, strength and speed;

The ponderous mammoth, now extinct,
The elephant, that yet we see,
The stripèd tiger, spotted pard,
The lordly lion, fierce and free;

The camel and the antlered deer,
The horse, so swift and beautiful,
The simple sheep, the patient cow,
The friendly dog, so dutiful;

And many more we need not name
That minister to man's delight
With sweets and odors, strengths and foods,
And sounds and colors dark and bright.

PART III.

But lo! what mateless form appears,
Whose eyes, like spirits from above,
Look from the watchtower of the soul
With mingled wonder, power and love?

Wisdom and justice on his brow
His origin divine proclaim,
And in his secret being burns
A spark of the eternal flame.

To crown the long procession vast
Of varied life that upward still
From lowly forms less beautiful
Mounts to the summit of the hill—

The Monarch of Creation stands,
The heir of heaven on Eden's sod;
Earth, bird and beast are made for man,
But man—O, joy!—is made for God.

Among the creatures of the earth,
Like shepherd through his flock he moves,
To each he gives the fitting name
Expressive of their hates and loves.

They flee not, hurt not, for he them
By sovereignty of nature rules;
The power of mind o'er matter bears
The sway—as wise men over fools.

The birds and beasts in happy pairs
He sees, and utters, "Why?" and sighs.
His voice like lonely music rings,
But no one like himself replies.

Alone, alas! without a peer;
A nameless feeling fills his breast,
He sinks upon the violet bank,
And poppies lull him into rest.

And Adam dreams that from his side,
Near life's mysterious music strings,
Radiant in beauty, love and grace,
The Form Maternal springs!

The crimson roses deeper blush,
The lilies smile in softer white,
And paradisan blossoms fill
The air and sense with strange delight.

The skies are brighter, and the bees
Make sweeter honey than before;
The budding flowers fain would bloom,
That earth with beauty may run o'er.

The birds with added rapture pour
Their notes of joy, and love, and praise;
The rills and murmuring cataracts
Afar, half veiled in azure haze,
Send on the gentle breeze their lays.

All nature glows with lovelier hues;
What can the fair creation mean?
To deck the chamber of the Bride!
To grace the coming of the Queen!

And Eva over Adam leaned,
And with her fingers touched his eyes,
Breaking that deep and pregnant trance—
"My husband and my lord, arise!"

And Adam knew she was his wife,
  Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone,
The mould of all humanity;
  But Eva's spirit was her own—

A spirit of such compass formed
  That to the highest act can rise,
And to the lowest deep sink down;
Can drag man to the door of hell
  Or lift him upward to the skies!

The mystery Eva held she gave
  To all her daughters—to her sons
Unsolvable, while earth is trod;
Her husband first she disobeyed
  And then she disobeyed her God.

O, lovely listeners to my tale,
  Stop not, displeased, those "ivory shells" *
With your fair hands, nor turn away
  Those eyes, where so much beauty dwells!

Think not that I, of woman born,
  Shall sing the ill by woman done;
No! let us fly across the gulf
  Where mankind weltered, stained and torn—
And see the mother of the Son,
Who has a holier work begun.

PART IV.

When kings are born the trumpets bray,
The cannons thunder from the wall,
And giddy fools make holiday
For one who may perchance appal
And fill the world with dire dismay.

In silence springs the crystal fount,
In silence sits the brooding dove,
The myriad forest leaves unfold
In silence to the blue above.

In silence blooms the lovely rose
And fills with fragrance all the air,
The stars in silence look on us
To wean us from our noisy care.

In silence the young lover looks
Upon the sweetly bashful face
Whose silent, soft and rosy lips
Are to his heart the gates of grace.

From peace, the light of morning mounts,
And sinks into the peace of even',
In silent twilight forms the dew,
The mingled tears of earth and heaven.

In the dark silence of the ground
The germs of flowers and fruit and grain
Shoot upward with persistent life,
And clothe with beauty hill and plain.

And thought from holy silence springs
In woodland shade or dusky room,
Filling the earth with deathless things
That scatter sin, and grief, and gloom.

So rose the Lily without stain,
The second Eva of our race—
Mary, to whom an angel bowed,
And said, "Hail! Full of Grace!"

O, bring the purple hyacinth,
The tulip's dewy wine-cup bring!
And lowly wind flowers of the wilds
And all the blossoms of the Spring!

Bring the pale heart-flower of the rock,
The primrose from the sheltered nook;
And bring the tender silken leaves
The sunny wind of promise weaves
Beside the singing brook!

Though half bowed down by flakes of frost
And though the fields are bleak around,
Leave not the snow-drop, pure and pale,
Whose love has pierced the wintry ground.

Bring, too, the early violet,
Of humble mien and odor sweet,
With tassels of the stripling trees,
And strew them at her feet.

And from the too long sterile heart
Bring flowers of gratitude! for these
Are dearer far to heaven and her
Than precious pearls from twilight seas,
Or any flower on earth that grows—
They shame the lily and the rose.

O, let us love whom God has loved!
Whom God has blest, O, let us bless!
Whom God has chosen, let us choose!
Woe, woe, if we do less!

Lo! by one loving breath she opèd
The gates of Heaven to banished man!
For through her meek, obedient love,
Almighty God fulfills His plan:

She bore the Savior of the world,
She fed him from her virgin breast;
She, pierced by sorrow, saw Him die,
And laid in death's mysterious rest.

With Him she lives in heaven for aye,
With Him whose law is love and peace,
Whose reign is in the humble heart,
Whose reign shall never cease.

O, joy to all of womankind!
Beauty in you must ever shine,
Who can perceive and use the power
Of brave obedience divine!

Your plastic fingers touch the race
In infancy, when all is new,
Not as the potter and the clay,
But as the rose receives its hue
And form from earth and sun and rain,
So children do from you.

Touched by that pure and holy love
That back to hell the dragon hurled,
You hold the lever in your hands
To lift the world!

PART V.

The winds are hushed, the leaves are still,
The birds have ceased their amorous lays,
The day is fading from the vale;
Only the tops of distant hills
Receive the farewell rays.

The rivulet is better heard
Though dim and not so plainly seen;
And all the colors, born of light,
In which the beauteous flowers were bright,
Are lost in dusky green.

We will not see the glow-worm's lamp,
Nor hear the lonely night-bird cry,
Nor stay to see the star appear—
Hesper, the soul of evening sky.

For in the peace of happy home
  Your eyes shall shed a dearer light
Than all the cold and pallid stars
  That glitter on the brow of night.

And with this wish I bid adieu,
  While light is left us in the skies:
That we who fell by *Eva's* fall
Beneath sin's dark and deadly pall,
  With sainted *Mary* now shall rise
  And gain that light that never dies!

IN THE PRESENCE.

Adore, my soul! thy Saviour is near!
Circled with silence like a sleeping babe,
The fount of life, yet passive as in death,
The fount of glory, where no radiance beams,
All veiled in pity upon thee, my soul!

Adore, my soul! thy Savior is near!
The rose, the lily and the passion-flower,
Ensculptured, form His sacred dwelling place;
Emblems of suffering, purity and love—
The emblems of his life on earth for thee!

Adore and love! thy Savior is near!
Within the hollow of the silver lamp
The watchful light is burning steadily,

Flinging its crimson where His feet have been;
Thus let thy love still burn for Him, my soul!

O, Jesus, God! Thy sacred peace flows 'round
In this sphered stillness like a noiseless wave,
Steeping all restless thoughts which are not Thine
Into forgetfulness. Now time seems o'er,
And death itself is but to love Thee more!

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

I.

Daughter of God! Bride of the Holy Breath!
Sole Virgin Mother of the Eternal Son!
Over whose beauty incorruptible the spectre Death
No victory has won:
To Thee my soul in wonder lifts her eyes,
Then, dazzled, bows,
And whispers, "Hear our cries!"

Hear us, O purest Maid! whose Maker deigns
To wear the vesture of Humanity,
From Thy chaste being woven! Folded by thy crimson veins,
Immortal Love in thee
Espoused our mortal life, our souls to save
For heaven above,
From hell's deep yawning grave!

O. radiant, priceless Jewel of our race!
Alone found worthy in thy breast to bear
The One True God, who made, sustains, and rules
all time, all space!
What blinded mortal dare
Aspire to heaven, and will not ask the way
Of her who brought
Heaven down to human clay!

Most pure Conception! through Time's riven veil
The pale-mouthed prophet saw, and joyful cried—
"Behold, a Virgin shall bring forth a Son, Emanuel!"
And now, the Serpent's pride
He 'neath his heel has crushed, O, Joy! and raised
Our fainting state;
His name and Thine be praised!

Terror of hell! the wicked scream with fear,
And hide them from thy virgin loveliness,
More than of old from lightning-pointed archangelic
spear!
While little children press
To heap thy altars, and thy lap to fill
With flowers and leaves
Gathered from vale and hill!

II.

Woman Sublime! who, with thy milk-white hand,
Hath lifted mother, daughter, sister, wife,
Into that higher realm of equal love, whose holy hand

Binds our frail mortal life
With flowers of love divine!
O, still sustain us, lest we faint and fail
And faithlessly repine!

Rebellious Life our self-willed Eva gave,
But from Archangel's lips the "Ave" came,
And from thy bosom's Truth, Obedient Love, O,
Mother brave!
Lit all the world with flame.
Ah, may that sacred fire
My heart and spirit permeate and fill,
Till time in love expire!

All generations call thee blessed. Yea,
And blest are we who bless thee evermore!
From thee our everlasting comfort springs, to thee we
pray—
Thy womb's dear Fruit adore,
And hail the Living Ark
Who bore the Dove with olive branch of peace
Above the waters dark!

Hail, Mary! Mother of Our God and King!
Clothed with the Sun, the Moon beneath thy feet—
O, beauteous feet that o'er the mountains best of
tidings bring,
Holy, and true, and sweet!
O, Virgin full of Grace!
O, Queen of Mercy! pray for us that we
In heaven may see thy face!

Jesus is with thee. He, the One True Vine,
Whose trellis was the Cross, whose wine the Blood
That cheers his virgins with the ruby glow of love benign!
O, by that Holyrood!
Pray for us all to Him,
The sceptre of whose pity thou dost hold
Above the Seraphim.

III.

Gem of the universe! the brightest flower
That on the tropic-girdle of our sphere
Has ever ope'd its bosom to the dew and pearly shower
Grows pale and dim and sere
Beside thy peerless name;
In thee, O Mystic Rose! O Lily Pure!
Blossom and Bud endure!

O, by thy joy, which angels cannot know!
O, by thy sorrow, deep as love in death!
O, by thy glory, unimaginable here below!
And by the blessed faith
That leads to Christ Our Lord,
Plead, with those azure pools of love divine,
For this fair land of thine!

This land, so mighty in its opulence,
And in its breed of men who know not fear;

This world, through peril sought and found for Christ's
dear sake—and hence
To thy soul ever dear—
Shall, by thy powerful aid,
Arise in Faith and do such deeds for God
As make old records fade.

See! Nature sprinkles o'er its meadows wide
White lilies for thy altars of the May!
Devoted hearts bring branches green from rugged
mountain side,
And bud, and bloom, and spray,
Sweet gifts from florist's hand,
Deck the blithe churches where our hymns arise
To thee in Paradise!

Daughter of God! Spouse of the Holy Ghost!
Sole Virgin Mother of the Eternal Son!
Over whose beauty incorruptible sin cannot boast
Trophy or triumph won—
Accept my tuneless voice!
Help, stainless One! that I may weep and mourn,
And in thy joy rejoice!

CHRISTINA.

CANTO I—INSIDE THE CHURCH.

In a far land, which I shall see no more,
A city stands, by roses and the sea
Encircled; on three sides the waves flow 'round,
Now o'er the wrinkled sand in mirthful play,
Now dashing on the rocks and rolling far
With hollow gurgling into low-browed caves
That darkly stretch for miles beneath the land;
And on the other, fields of roses bind
The city like a gem. Within that place
Young Hubert lived, and on that wrinkled sand
With splint of cedar driftwood would trace
Her name whose image filled and fired his soul.
First love, the fount of sighs and poesy,
Had touched his heart and brain and lips with fire,
And thus the letters of her name he wove
In rhyme, and wrote them in the sand for love.

"'Care—may it never mar thy brow!
Health—may it bloom upon thy cheek!
Roses without the thorns be thine!
I fain would with thy name some beauty twine,
So lovely art thou: but my words are weak
To paint thee as I view thee now
In my fond memory; thy large dark eyes—
Nor pen nor pencil gives their light divine—
Are windows of a soul whose smile is paradise!

"The envious tide will wash all this away,
But graven in my heart," he said, "that name,

Untouched by time, shall live. Lo! in the dawn
The morning star hath faded, and the mist
Melts in the kindling blushes of the morn,
And, sleeping 'neath its sparkling coverlid,
The far-off bosom of the sea is kissed
By the o'erarching sky. Tattered and torn,
Like banners on the battlefield, the clouds,
Dabbled with blood and edged with burnished gold,
Back from the gateway of the sun are rolled,
And here, with ceaseless murmur, at my feet
The limpid water with his many tongues
Moistens the pebbles and the veinèd shells,
As oft I've done in childhood's wondrous hour,
Until they looked like flowers through morning dew.
But what are these to me? Sun, sea, or cloud,
With all their beauty, cannot give me rest,
Nor cool this burning fever in my breast.

"Last night I dreamed of her, and she was here;
She stood, it seemed, upon this shining sand,
Her forehead pale, but beautiful as morning,
And her long, weeping hair fell down like clouds
That stream their darkness over sunny hills:
Her bosom fluttered like a prisoned bird,
And from her lustrous eyes, so sweetly wild,
Awoke strange flashes, and a brighter hue
Suffused her olive cheek and pale rose lips.
The sky seemed stooping down to take her from me,
And clothe her with the ever-changing gold
And azure hangings of the tents of heaven;
The stars came out and plunged into the deep,

Where, far beneath, each found a trembling bride,
Then wheeled in charmèd circles 'round the pole;
But, as I dared to take her by the hand,
My dream was broken—the sweet vision fled.

And here she is not, as I might have known;
But a vague feeling moved my sleepless feet
To wander here, and speak of her aloud
Where none can hear me. I have read of some
That, like the fluttering moth, will dangle 'round
The objects of their love, irresolute,
And, blinded, burn their silken wings and fall;
But, as an arrow to its destined aim,
My soul, O, lovely one, would fly to thee,
Impatient of digression; piercing swift
Both space and time, and all the chains and bars,
The unseen network of our social state.
And even that hallowed modesty itself,
Which, like the moonlight pure, encircles thee,
And clasp thee to my heart.

"The favored savage
Sees by the river's marge his dusky bride,
And, with his soul on fire with all her charms,
He like a lion from the thicket leaps,
And bears her off in triumph to his bower.
The glorious knight of old rode 'neath the moon,
And from the castle walls, by cords of love
Let down, the sweetest burden filled his arms.
So would I seize to bless and shield thee ever,
For as the sun looks on the earth in spring,

And as the torrent from the mountain side
Sweeps to the deep and placid lake below,
So would I look and haste to thee, my love!

"Now swing the bells in the cathedral tower,
And now her gentle feet are on the pavement;
For, regular as is the sacrifice,
The firstlings of the day she gives to God.
Now 'neath the budding maple trees she walks,
Now she ascends the steps, and as she glides
Through the great doorway, dim and arched and high,
She moves her pure sweet lips, and, whispering, says,
'Here will I enter, through thy mercy, Lord!'
Now in the little pool of water dips
Her lovely fingers, and upon her brow
She hangs a drop that sparkles like a gem,
And murmurs, 'Sprinkle me with hyssop, Lord!'
Why do I linger? In that hallowed place
I soon may steal some glimpses of her face."

Adown the valley of this stream that flows
Into the sea, the rolling waves of sound,
Sent circling from the metal mouths afar
Upon the peaceful Sabbath morning air,
Float faster than the waters glide along,
And in yon dark ravine now wail and sigh
Like heart forlorn; move faintly trembling reeds
And lowly weeds that o'er the margin lean;
And now the very air apart is torn
As the loud burst of joy peals forth and calls
The startled echo from the dewy banks;

To Hubert's ear they speak of her alone,
For love can turn all sounds to joy or moan.

"This is the church, the house of God our Lord,
But now I seem like an unbidden guest;
I hesitate and linger 'round the door,
I do not wish to walk, yet cannot rest.
The "Ite missa est" would please mine ear,
That I might see her stepping gently by,
Her lily fingers clasped about her book
And love's own shadow 'neath her drooping lids,
Then walk as with an angel by my side.
Oh, if there's anything on earth divine,
It is her sweet and strange unconscious look,
Where simple grace and beauty blend with worth,
Like precious jewel from the hidden mine,
That shines without the poor intent to shine."

And so he entered, filled with one sole thought,
But quickly felt abashed, and bent his knee
To Him whose presence awes the heart that beats
Too rapidly for things of mortal mould;
By one keen thought his love was cut in twain:
One part would die, the other live forever;
Earth would return to earth, her soul alone
Would triumph over time—he sighed and mused.
But ardent youthful passion seldom gives
Long time to fearful thought. The sighs he breathed
Soon danced into a song upon his lips,
Unheard by any, save his throbbing heart.

"Fearful it is to love that which must die,
Yet when beside thee I think not of death;
Mortal it is not—the heaven of thine eye,
Mortal it is not—thy musical breath!

"Fearful it is to love that which must fade,
Yet I will love thee were death at thy side;
Love thee in sunshine, and love thee in shade,
Thou crown of creation, my jewel, my bride!

"Time is unknown when thy hand is in mine,
Space by thy presence is full. And thy kiss!
There is something about it so pure and divine,
Which interprets the state in the regions of bliss."

The church is large; the morning sunlight streams
Through the stained glass and sprinkles all the floor
With colors fit to pave the floor of heaven.
The altar is pure white, just touched with gold,
Crowned with the eternal symbol of true faith,
Whereon the dying God our Saviour hangs;
His head droops low, as if he spoke to children,
His arms extend, as if to clasp the world!
And round his feet, sculptured by loving art,
Lie wrapped in wonder young-eyed cherubim.
The holy tabernacle stands beneath,
Enclasped most fittingly with passion-flowers
For suffering; and lilies pure and pale,
For innocence; roses for love divine,
With ears of wheat and clusters of the vine,

In whose elected substance the benign
And gracious Shepherd doth Himself enshrine!

A dark-haired priest, bent slightly, yet not old,
Takes off his upper vestment and kneels down;
His face, his gait, his attitude bespeak
A conscious and mysterious dignity,
An ardor that disturbs not his repose,
As if he said to God within his heart—

"Weak though I be,
Despised and poor amid earth's opulence,
It is enough to know, ere I go hence,
That Christ our Lord is brother unto me.

"Enough to know
His power of blessing in my right hand lies,
That unto him that mourns and him that dies,
I stand for God above to these below.

"Through dust and strife,
To the low hovel where the poor man moans,
Or costly mansion where his brother groans,
To dying lips I bear the Bread of Life.

"For *truth* to stand,
Against the seas and hills of sin and wrong,
O, perilous position! yet how strong
When He our Leader holds me in his hand!

"And it is mine,
When the chaste dew hangs on the silent grass,
And light new-born flows throngh the tinted glass,
To offer up the sacrifice divine!

"How sweet to breathe
The odor of the incense as it mounts
From chinkling censer to the eternal founts
Whose tide of love descends on us beneath!

"O, Holy God!
Great Father! Bleeding Lamb! and Stainless Dove!
How shall I answer to thy wondrous love?
Thyself I'll offer Thee, O, Holy God!"

And, stepping to the pulpit, he began,
In a low tone, like a cool crystal spring,
Then, like a rivulet that glides along,
Touching the flowers nodding on its brink,
Then like a river, broad and full of power,
And leaping over rocks, but never lost,
He poured his flood of feeling and of thought
Upon the mass of breathless listeners,
As the rich inundations of the Nile
Fill the expectant valleys full of joy!
A priceless treasure he had surely found,
A treasure which he understood and loved;
He knew the gaping wounds that it would close,
And with a generous hand he scattered it
In such proportion as his sick could bear.

Like a worn traveler from distant lands—
Regions of healing truth and holy joy—
He seemed to come, laden with sovereign balm
And bread-fruit, fragrant oil, and cheering wine,
Pale with the burden which he loved to bear.
True eloquence that wells up from the heart
May reach the heart; the cold and subtle brain
Can only touch the brain, and that which lives
Only upon the tongue, dies on the ear!

But, ah! what rhetoric can touch the soul
Steeped in indifference, or puffed with pride?
Yon creature now that o'er the threshold steps,
With airs well suited to the wife of Jove—
How shall her soul be entered, being full,
Until some shaft of sorrow pierce her breast?
Down the church aisle in majesty she sweeps,
As if she said, "I honor much the room
With this my gracious presence, for behold,
All you that are not lost in piety,
One who is beautiful now come to take
The thoughts you were about to give to prayer!"
Then into a posture fit for a saloon
She throws herself, and carelessly lets fall
A piece of richest drapery from her arm,
And picks it up, that it may fall again;
Then with her jeweled fingers smooths her hair,
And wishes that the next pew were a mirror.
Heaven! that a temple thou hast formed so fair
Should be the dwelling of impiety!

That those rare lips, that should adoring move,
Should curl with empty smiles or silly scorn!
That those large eyes, which wander over all,
Should miss the presence of their maker—God!

And there, beside her, huddled in a heap,
A simple girl is sitting with her beads;
Plain, homely features, doubtless, and poor clothes,
Yet there the angel of humility
Adds to her lowliness the hallowed grace
Which pride withdraws from features that are fair.
And that dull-featured man, with eyes half closed
And mind asleep, save in one dusky nook
Filled and alive with schemes of earthly gain,
What spear can pierce, what icebrook tempered sword
Of living words can reach his callous soul!
And Hubert, too, is deaf; and though his heart
Beats, it responds not to the preacher's thought;
His keen bright eyes see only one dear form
That sits unconscious of his passioned looks.

The speaker ends, and towards the altar moves;
The seed is scattered with a liberal hand;
Some falls on stony ground and takes no root,
Some falls on shallow soil and quickly springs,
But in the sun's heat withers up and dies;
Some falls on earth that fertile is and deep,
And brings forth fruit a hundred fold, and more;
So it has been, and is, and still will be.
And now the wondrous sacrifice takes place,

The "Clean Oblation" long ago foretold,
First offered on the Mount of Calvary.
The measure of all love is sacrifice;
True as the truest of thermometers,
This index of the heart will last forever.
"What wouldst thou do for me?" is all God asks,
And then He truly knows how much I love.
Some sacrifice their pride, and some their wealth,
And some their appetites, and some their wills,
And some their intellects, and some their lives;
Christ offered all and more than these, being God.
So, from the widow's mite of some poor girl
And him who does the most, to Jesus, Lord,
Religion stands one mighty sacrifice!

We think not much about the air we breathe,
Nor of the cooling water which we drink,
Nor of the starry host that in the vast
And hollow cave of night forever rolls,
As if to guard and soothe the slumbering world;
Nor of the sun, the bridegroom of the earth,
That lights and warms and cheers us day by day—
So common and so plentiful are they.

So the continual bounty of our God
We oft forget—forget that with the dawn,
Chasing the darkness ever, He descends
Upon our poor dim altars, and repeats
The wondrous mystery of mysteries.
Sun of the soul, hope of the weary heart,

And to the good as vital air profuse,
Cooling and quiet as the morning dews.

Munificence eternal! feeding still
From founts unknown, the mighty stream of life
That floods the universe, and, not content,
Desires to feed all people with Himself!
Ah! if the holy sacrifice were made
Once in a lifetime, on some mountain's head,
How would the nations haste, from plain and shore,
To praise and love, to wonder and adore!

'Tis finished; and the faithful towards their homes
Move cheerfully, but Hubert lingers there
A little longer. She is kneeling yet,
And 'tis his wish to meet her as she dips
Her fingers in the holy-water vase,
That he, by seeming accident may get,
In courtesy, as any stranger will,
A little from her fingers on his own.
And so he has. "Sweet thoughts be thine,"
He said. "Sweet thoughts be thine, and holy joy,"
Said she; and forth they passed into the light
Of April clouds and soft blue skies.

CANTO II—LOVE.

Old as our frail first mother, Eve, who held,
As forests slumber in an acorn-cup,
Unnumbered generations in her womb,

Is love—dear love, the solace of the world.
Old as the earthly paradise, which God
Steeped in the sunlight of felicity.
Which lay around that river of delight
That parted into four—the Euphrates,
The Phison, Tigris, Gehon: where the land
Is fertile; where the onyx-stone, and gold,
And bdellium are—so old is human love.
And, like the river of delight, it sprang
In Eden, and keeps flowing ever since,
Saving the blossoms of the heart from frost,
In many streams to all parts of the world.
Primeval sacrament, which Adam's sin
Could not destroy, nor the great deluge drown;
Which time can never wear, nor science touch;
From the beginning blest, and still shall be.
So old? and yet as young, and fresh, and gay
As this bright morn that, from the orient sea,
Sprang like a new creation: sweet and pure
As folded rosebuds full of dewy hope,
Or lilies fair that ere to-morrow bloom.

But far, far older is that love divine,
Begotten ere the sons of morning sang
And waked the echoes of the universe:
That glowed in silence ere the scythe of Time
Cut in two halves the vast eternity,
And made a little gap for man to breathe!
O Love Divine, that knows nor age nor change!
O, ever new! yon virgin, ere she sleep,

Will give her beating heart to thee, and flee
The stainings of the world. Yon stripling, too,
Will veil his eyes that he may not behold
The loveliest form on earth, to follow thee!
Thrice happy they who by the Lord are led!
Thrice happy they who can so tame their blood!
Theirs is the holy joy, the life of peace,
The purer foretaste of eternal things!

But to our youthful pair this is the earth,
And, as they wander by the river's side,
What visions fill the ardent Hubert's soul
Of happiness on earth. He paints a scene
Wherein nor thorn nor thistle ere shall grow,
As Fancy, to the beating of his heart, says—
"Lovely is the virgin now beside thee,
Strange the shadows from her raven lashes,
Wonderful the wells of light beneath them;
And the sun has loved her and enriched her,
For her sun-kissed cheek makes fine contrast
With the milky fountains of her bosom—
Fountains hidden all her maiden spring tide,
Hidden, till the tiny fingers, groping,
Dinting fitfully their spherèd whiteness,
Seek the budding circlets of pale crimson!
See, thy rosy children playing round thee
On the greensward, 'neath the summer sunlight.
See, they deck with flowers their dimpled sister,
Twining with her ringlets leaves and blossoms.
Now they clasp thee like the vine's fond tendrils,

And that latest gift that holds repeated
All the beauty of her beauteous mother,
Nestles in thy neck and says, 'My father!'"
Ah! they now around thee grow like cedars,
On their lips young hope and life are beaming,
Thy pride are they, thy glory and thy shelter,
The swift and polished arrows of thy quiver;
Man and woman graciously regard thee,
Thou hast tilled a field both fair and fruitful,
And in yellow autumn thou art blessèd!
So runs the glowing reverie of his mind,
Then swiftly turns to where it first began,
To her dear eyes, soft lips, and heaving breast.

O, lovely nature! O, sweet ties of life!
O, sun-loved earth, how glorious art thou,
Thou mighty mother! From thy willing womb
What shining treasures rise to bless mankind!
From thy unwithered bosom, corn, and oil,
And wine, and beauty flow, to feed the world!
But fairer far than earth, or sea, art thou,
Woman! Earth's goddess! where mysterious life
Unconsciously to consciousness awakes!
From thee we spring, thou beauty of all time,
And, with the gathered force of many years
Folded within our hearts, to thee return,
Bringing our earthly immortality,
Our truest word, lit by the fire of love,
Our highest offering before we die.

All that is lovely in the earth or air
Centres in thee, as mother, sister, bride.
Thou art a world, a hidden vineyard thou,
And we, made dumb by so much loveliness,
Can only sigh until with joy we find
A single member of the beauteous race,
Within our reach, with "Yes" upon her lips,
Then heart to heart is joined eternally.

And never "yes" from sweeter lips was breathed
Than from this Christian maiden pure and good.
Now twenty springs and summers she had lived
A rare, embodied thought from God's own mind,
By inward law developed; perfected
Each hour, and day, and year, so gently still
Among obstructions common to all life,
Which mar the being only where the law
Is weak within—that as a babe, a girl,
A budding virgin, now an opening rose,
All change had been but beauty sprung to light,
Which lay enfolded in the one before.

But, ah! what words are adequate to paint
That wondrous form, whose every graceful line
Defies all measurement? Those features where
The *unity*, that subtile bond that binds
The obedient elements in harmony,
Themselves all beautiful—cannot be given?
The pencil here is greater than the pen,
And might have once the sweet relations told

Of brow to eye, and eye to vermeil lip.
But lost, alas, forever, to this world
Is all her loveliness! To paint her well
Had been an artist's immortality,
And for the earth a thousand years of joy!

Far to the south she had her birth, and love
Preceded her existence. Peace within
The vine-clad cottage of her sire, was not
A guest, but resident; true love was there;
And where love is a new creation may
Give a new beauty to man's wondering eyes.
Where love is not, old forms are stereotyped,
A little worse or better, but not new.
The primal malediction rests on man
More fearfully in this regard than ought.
Labor is nothing; man must toil and sweat
Ere he can taste the sweets of joy and rest;
Toil executes his thought, and exercise
For mind, and heart, and limb, is blessing now.
But union without love—that fills the world
With hate and lovelessness hereditary.
Where parents live in hell, no blossom bud
Of love can in that desert spring and live;
No callow murmuring bird can learn to sing
In that foul nest of discord; living on,
They carry to the future home the strife.
Revere her parents ere thou choose thy wife!

She was a blending of the finer parts
Of both; a new, unique identity,
Moulded in love's own furnace of delight,
Washed from the stain of Eve by holy hands,
And called Christina, that she never might
Forget the ransom paid for her by Christ.
A mother's love made holier by her faith,
A father's love made deeper by his thought,
Had nurtured and defended her, until
God's dark-robed mercy took them from this earth
Both in one day, so much he prized their love.
And then she learned true sorrow all too soon,
Which o'er her face a shade of sadness threw,
Yet made her eye more beautiful and meek.
And in this sighing world of ours, in sooth,
She who has never felt true grief of heart
Has not received Beauty's most touching touch;
For man is born to trouble, and is like
The fruit that ripens with a little frost.
O sorrow! rain and dew to human hearts!
Angel of love behind a veil of tears!
What virtues follow thy moist steps, as o'er
Our gardens of affection thou dost pass,
Crushing our roses, lilies, violets,
So seeming ruthlessly! O, I would not
Efface one print which thy dear foot has made,
Even if thy coarser brother, Joy, would fill
With his own wine the space, till it run o'er!

The wine of joy now fills the lovers' hearts;

Silence for them seems better far than words,
And, from the modest pressure of the hand,
Enough of love's electric currents flow.
Wrapt in a pleasing mystery, they move
As if there were none others in the world—
But Adam and his helpmate o'er again,
And earth as fair as paradise before
The serpent, in deceitful graces clad,
Poured hellish poison into Eve's proud ear.
The lovers' hearts are one. The vows are made,
And sealed by ruby signets, passion pressed;
All things that will not fade are witnesses—
Faith, Truth and Love, and the bright hosts of heaven!
All that is beautiful, serene or grand,
Forms fitting background for immortal love;
The living stream, blue air, and hanging rock
Where cedars clutch with persevering roots,
And lift their heads into the smiles of heaven—
As holy wedlock's self, whose roots in time
Are fixed, but whose immortal fruit may lie
Before the throne of God—all these and more
Are witnesses two hearts are now made one,
Which still will live apart until that voice
That blessed the first of mortals bless them too.

CANTO III—THE AIR.

"I look to find some form I may compare
With his whose image in my bosom lies,
But fancy fails me, and the earth around
Gives naught like him to glad my weary eyes.

"Long, long it seems since I have heard his voice,
And yet his voice is with me night and day;
His eyes look into mine when earth is dark,
And then I wake, and find he is away.

"His brow is like a palace pale with light,
The rose of life is blooming on his cheek,
His eyes are like two sapphires of the sky,
Darkened by shadows, searching, large and meek.

"And I am tawny. Yet he used to praise
My dim, wan cheek, and my soft, dimpled chin;
The clustering darkness of my hair, mine eyes,
My lips and the twin rows of pearls within.

"I fear 't was but compassion made him love,
That he might shield so frail a thing as I,
For beauty I have none. Alas! alas!
Were it not sinful I would wish to die!

"Perhaps some other maiden he has seen;
And I have heard that man is fickle-hearted—
Be still, my beating breast, for lo, he comes!
And now it seems that we have ne'er been parted!"

"Where hast thou been these many, many days?
And why art thou so pale and hollow-eyed?
Ah, thou hast suffered something terrible,
And I, alas! not near to comfort thee!"

With that the tears ran down her lovely cheeks,
And Hubert kissed them every one away,
And drew her down beside him on the moss
That wrapped the roots of a gigantic pine.
The sea lay all before them, murmuring
Like giant in his dreams; and, o'er the sea,
The sky, without one spark of cloud to stain
The everlasting azure; earth, behind,
Lay all unseen; and, save the cushioned spot
Whereon they rested, and the sandy shore
That stretched a little space before their feet,
And some dark pendant boughs, above their heads,
Of never-fading green—the world for them
Seemed all shut out. Then sadly spoke the maid—

"Indeed, my heart was like a widow's grown,
Until I saw thee in this solitude
Which thou hast ever chosen for our walks.
And even now, a strange presentiment
Comes o'er my heart, that it is widowed yet.
Something has happened which I fear, yet wish
To know, and thou art longer silent now
Than was thy wont. Thy clustered chestnut locks
Are straggled on thy brow, and 'neath thine eyes
The pearly hue is darker than before;
A beard upon the corners of thy chin
Has grown, which makes thee less and less like me;
The playful line dividing thy full lips
Grows straighter, and the pressure of thy hand,
Whose veins are fuller, and of darker blue,

Feels some restraint, as of a bridle thrown
Upon thy soul!"

"O, dearest one on earth!
Have patience; all is well. What I have seen,
And where, I'll tell to thee, and only thee.
Yet I shall fail, because my lips are mortal,
To make thee see as I myself have seen;
For human words are trammeled in their birth,
Discordant and confused; they swallow time
In slow unfolding of a mighty thought
By lesser thoughts, as if a man should see
One day a seed, another day a leaf,
Another many leaves, and then again
A well-grown vine, and on the next the bloom,
And after that the fruit mature; and I
Had seen the whole e'en at a single glance—
Seed, leaf, vine, flower, and clusters fair and ripe.
Or, as an eagle, high above the earth,
Sees rivers rise, sweep over many lands,
And lose themselves in ocean; and we here
See but the bend of some small tributary.

"When we had sealed our fondly-plighted faith
With many silent kisses and heart-throbs,
And parted, I walked quickly to the wood
That stretches some few miles along the vale.
The many windings of the rivulet,
And all the paths within, I know full well,
Yet on I walked, not thinking where I went,

Until the night came on before I knew.
I was astray; and from my height of joy,
Which from the pressure of thy bosom sprang,
I fell into the gloomiest views of life,
And every shape in nature that I saw
Seemed like a phantom pressing on my soul.
The shapeless moon was sinking helplessly,
Like my poor dying mother, wasted, pale,
The round of womanhood all worn away;
Then like shot sea-bird dangling through the air,
Then like a vessel bleached by wind and wave,
Drifting all tenantless into the dark
Long ridge of clouds, that looked like moving graves.
A weight of grief without its memory,
A dim remembrance of celestial thoughts,
Which for a moment in their beauty came,
But unrecorded died, oppressed my soul.
I felt some unknown loss. I sat me down
Beside the little stream upon a stone,
And listened to the low wind as it sighed
Among the shivering leaves, and watched the stars
Swing in the water at my feet, till all
Was covered o'er by large, dark, trailing clouds,
Like muffled ghosts. A hand here touched my head,
And a voice said, 'Fear not! but come with me!'
I strained mine eyes, I grasped the figure's arm,
But the wind blew its mantle 'round my frame,
And all my light was gone, and down we sank.
Down, down we went, but where I know not yet;

The air felt cold and damp, as in a cave
Where sunlight never falls; and once I felt,
Against my side, the hard wall of a precipice—
My breath was spent, I swooned, and knew no more.

"How long we fell, or through what space we fell,
I could not guess, but slowly woke with pain
Across mine eyeballs, and a sense of light
Through my stiff lids; the air seemed fresh and pure.
I looked, and lo! the universe was gone!
We seemed to form the centre of vast space,
Which, like an ocean limitless and still,
Circled around, and under, and above.
No promontory sunny-browed was there,
Or headland green, or lone cloud islanded
Upon that strange and dim uncertain sea.
But all so motionless and colorless,
That fear did almost drink my life away,
As, overpowered by nothingness and silence,
We hung, like solitary grains of dust,
Within this awful and unknown abyss.
Had I not had the feeling in my throat
As if my life and spirit wished to mount
In opposition to my body's weight,
Which dragged me still adown like sinking lead,
I would have thought that we were motionless.

'To see the face of my mysterious guide
I longed, and often upward cast a glance;
But whether he intended to conceal,

Or that in sinking the large mantle skirt
Blew back upon his visage, hiding it
By accident, I know not; yet an awe
And love for him possessed my soul at first,
As of a son towards a father dear.
Taller and stronger was he than myself,
And suddenly, as if my wish he knew,
He moved the folds from off his face, and looked
Half down on me, and lo! I knew him well!
A poet's crown, a simple wreath of leaves,
Lance-pointed, and as green as emerald,
Sat firmly on his head, and 'twixt the leaves
The gold and crimson amaranths of heaven!
As from the nimbus of a sainted head,
Light from this diadem illumed his face,
And his dark waving hair all floating up
As down and down we sank. The mighty bard
Who, led by Virgil, visited the realms
Of spiritual death and pining hope,
And by a fairer, dearer hand was brought
To view the wonders of God's paradise,
Was there beside me. Giotto's pencil had
So fixed the Florentine within my mind
That instantly his strong identity
Flashed on me; yet his face was somewhat changed;
The bitterness upon his nether lip
That used to be, was turned to sweetness now.

"I would have spoken, but beneath our flight
Behold! the margeless ocean darker grows,

And one by one the stars start from the deep,
As in the twilight of our own dear earth.
Now they increase in bulk, and brighter grow
With every heart-beat; disks of pure white fire
Wheel past us right and left, and overhead!
O, who shall tell the grandeur of the scene?
The strange and lone sublimity which reigns
Where space illimitable stretches round,
And silence broods with never-lifted wing?
Where suns and planets, and attendant moons,
Crescents and girdles of the softest light,
Move in eternal order on their way!
And yet the grandeur lies in thought, not sight;
For planets, suns and rings of radiant fire
Seem but like spangles floating in the deep,
No bigger than our moon; my guide and I
The greatest objects in creation seemed,
For, 'twixt the circles of attracting power,
Where we belonged to neither orb, we moved;
Distance immense reducing spheres so vast
To points of brightness in the hollow gloom.

"How often do we vainly wish for power
To sail on mountain-clouds as through the blue
They sweep with fleecy summits bathed in light,
And view the hills and valleys spread below,
The shining rivers flowing o'er the earth,
And cities with their domes and towers and spires!
This would be grander far to human eyes

Than hanging in the centre, filled with awe,
Breathing the thin, strange air, and knowing naught
About the termination of our course.

"As on the ocean wrecked two men may be,
The one a swimmer, while the other clings
In terror to his vesture, so was I
Ready to perish and disperse in air
But for his powerful aid. A new field, soon,
Of pale and genial mist, well pleased, we met,
Which seemed to draw me sideways from my guide,
Who told me we were in a comet's wake,
And, as a boatman in a rapid stream
Aims higher up on the opposing bank,
We also at an angle had to cross
In that I, being still mortal, felt the force
Which he, a spirit, is not hindered by.

The darkness closed around like a dense mist,
And far beneath a something grew and spread
Like lurid drops wide-scattered over space.
Nearer and nearer still, until it seems
A mighty monster with a thousand mouths,
In whose red throats unnumbered tongues of fire
Move ceaselessly. My guide here stayed our flight,
And halting swung above. "The sulph'rous air
Grows hot," he said; "seven miles below this point
Thou couldst not see, nor breathe, as now thou art;
These are the chimneys and the doors of hell.
Since visited by me there has been change,

But change brings no alleviation there.
We entered by another way, whereon
The hopeless legend was, the which I read,
'All hope abandon, ye who enter here!'
And gave to those who tread your lightsome earth.
Hearken! to that strange sound that reaches us,
Like the far murmurs of some stormy sea!
None can distinguish what is gathered there—
Low mutterings of despair, and shrieks of pain,
And wailings that would melt thy human heart;
Foul execrations horrible to hear,
And all unutterable blasphemies.
Therefore, that foolish pity may not mar
The memory of things which thou shalt see,
And that the fire may have on thee no power,
I pour upon thy head this precious juice,
The bleedings from a tree of paradise,
Which as a shield will wrap thy tender frame,
And let thee pass unhurt through this great woe."
So, having ta'en a vial from his breast,
He did as he had said, and I could feel
Delicious coolness o'er my body flow,
And in my soul was strength, and in my heart
The feeling that the Lord of Power is just.
I crossed my hands upon my breast, and bowed
My head low down, adoring; and he, too,
Adoring, bowed a moment his wreathed head,
Crossing himself with both his beauteous hands,
Then we descended through the volumed smoke
That o'er the mouths of craters numberless

Hung like a restless black and pierless arch;
It seemed there was no room for earth or heaven,
A space so large is occupied by Hell.

But, see! the light is fading, and the star,
The star of love, beneath whose gentle ray
We parted last, is beaming; evil things
Come forth in darkness, let us haste away!
What I must tell thee, I must tell by day.

CANTO IV.—A GLIMPSE OF HELL.

Again we meet upon the sandy shore,
Again the lonely music of the sea
Hums in our ears; and floating in the blue,
Sometimes like heavenly palaces of light,
Sometimes to hills and vales, the airy clouds
Change to new forms of loveliness and peace.
When I behold thy beauty and this scene,
Then look into my memory, I say,
"Thanks be to heaven, I am on earth once more!"
Hell is a terrible reality
To him who for an instant has beheld
One object there; but far more terrible
To him who through its horrid womb has moved,
And seen the misery of miseries.
A thousandth part of it I will not tell;
And half of what I tell, thy gentle soul,
So pure and guileless, cannot comprehend;

Thy innocence is like a milk-white dove,
That lives on earth, but has no stain of earth;
Be happy that thou canst not understand
Some things I will relate; thy ignorance
More precious is than knowledge. Thankful be
That thy pure nature shrinks instinctively
At the recital, as the timid fawn,
Startled, shrinks back at moving of the grass
Before the deadly rattle stirs the air,
As if she felt the serpent's atmosphere!

No! I'll not tell thee. Live thy beauteous life!
Why shouldst thou know the crimes of this sad world?
For hell begins on earth; and if the Church,
With all her holy mysteries and life,
The bread and wine of immortality,
The pious supplications from the hearts
Of virtuous men and women, and the dear
And ever lovely lispings of the young,
With all the good deeds that are done unknown,
And noticed only by the eye of heaven—
If all these were not, earth would then be hell.
In vain the mountains lift their heads in air,
In vain upon their sides the cedars grow,
In vain the fertile valley spreads its charms,
Or the majestic river through its bosom
Carries the sunlit clouds and blue serene,
The treasures of earth's lap are poured in vain,
The grandeur of creation is as naught,
In sight of him who loves nor man nor God.

Yet I must tell some little part at least,
So that I fail not in obedience due.
"But why," I asked of him who led me there,
"Why bring'st thou me to this sad place of pain?
More than five hundred years ago thy pen
Gave to the upper earth a work sublime,
Thy 'Vision,' which reveals this under world,
The middle region, and the bliss of heaven.
What can I tell, of all that I may see,
To match one canto, or one page of thine?
Thou standest high among the laureled heads,
Thy fame continues to increase and shine,
What could I say to which mankind would listen?
I, poor, unknown, and lack the poet's power!"
There, now, said he, thy vanity appears;
'Tis not alone to tell what thou hast seen,
But for thy soul's salvation thou art brought
To see in truth that bodies shall endure
The fiercest pain, yet crumble not to ashes,
But, like the liver of Prometheus, grow
To feed the vulture fire, which never dies.
Thy weakling faith has often staggered been
At this same hell, and many more with thee,
That God, all good, should finite, sinful man
Condemn to punishment which has no end;
But know thou this, that were the damned in heaven,
'Twould be no heaven to them: within their breasts
They carry that which makes their hell, for they
Died in rebellion with the Good Supreme,
And dying thus, they rebels still remain,

Sinning forever, punished, too, for aye.
If for the cup of water which you give
For Jesu's sake, an infinite reward
Is granted, then a punishment as vast
Must follow mortal sin, when unforgiven.

First, for thy own eternal good, behold
This wretchedness, believe that God is just,
And thank him for his mercy unto thee;
Next, if thy memory serve thee, tell to her
Thy other soul, what thou shalt see and hear.
Trust to thy power, that rare intensity
By which thy mind can picture that which once
Has been conceived within it through thine eyes.
Whate'er thou writest will be easier read
Than mine, and also easier understood;
For I am only by the learnèd few
Perused and fathomed—though the many boast.
My admiration, too, of classic lore
And reverence for my gifted countryman,
Whose Ænead, filled with goddesses and gods,
Corrupt mythology of Greece and Rome,
That sways the minds of many in your day,
And hath debased both literature and art,
And dimmed religious light, and cooled its fire—
That subtle poison and its witchery
Inclined me to describe as beings seen
In this grim vault, old Charon and his boat,
And gloomy Pluto, and the Centaur troop,
The which I now could wish had not been writ;

For all this I, perhaps, have suffered pain,
But now 'tis vanished from my memory.
The Christian poet has a realm so broad,
So high, so rich, so true and beautiful,
Nature and *Faith*, with all their wondrous fruits,
He needs no pagan fancies to adorn
His pious numbers; for, although these names
May represent some principle in nature,
As Saturn, Time devouring his own children,
Or some great hero of the human race,
As Hercules, the strong and virtuous,
Or if, as some suppose, they are the gang
Who followed in revolt man's enemy,
And then became the deities of man,
How well they have succeeded in their game,
Earth's history, from the time in which I sighed
To that in which thou breathest, can declare.
Surely, 'tis more than time that things were called
By names that truly suit their qualities;
For beauty, which is still the poet's aim,
Must rest on truth, or beauty it is not.
And others, too, have labored to depict
This gloomy sepulchre of fallen men,
As if it were a region all sublime,
And round its chief a certain grandeur reigned,
A vulgar notion that belongs in time
Where characters corrupt, in clothing rich,
And odors rare float by like things divine,
When they are only lumps of gilded sin,
The garnished tombs, that hold but dead men's bones.

Virtue exalts, but hate debases ever,
And here is known just for the thing it is.
The costly glare which vice assumes on earth,
That it may pass for virtue, is not here;
No fingers, decked with pearls, and gems, and gold,
No jeweled ears, or cheeks with painted bloom,
Or ringlets, fragrant with the soul of flowers,
Nor satins, velvets, silks, or waving plumes;
All these the shallow slaves of sin may wear,
Without the virtues they might indicate,
But in this naked region are not seen.

That which is basest and most vile on earth,
Is here turned into instruments of woe:
Squalor, corruption, horrid snakes and apes,
And creeping things, all shapes most loathed and feared.
The very fiends, tormenting and tormented,
Lewd, hateful, weak, misshapen and half blind,
Bear not a trace of the angelic form.
Proud Lucifer himself, no regal throne,
Decked with barbaric pearl and massive gold,
Has ever yet possessed; though poets feign
He reigns in splendor like an eastern king.
No radiance lingers round his hollow eyes,
Nor sign of royalty, nor princely power;
No councilors of state around him throng,
In eloquence majestic, and no knee
Of supple courtier bends to do him grace;
Homage or reverence he has ne'er received;

No gleaming sceptre fills his withered hand;
His vast dominion is a desert wide,
Where hideous things can never hide themselves.
And where he suffers torments from the damned,
More grievous than his dupes sustain from him.
The radiant beauty vanished from his brow,
And faded all his archangelic light,
When from the starry battlements he reeled,
And staggered gasping down, transformed by sin
Into the ugliest monster ever left
On this side of annihilation's brink,
To be abhorred by all, or saved or lost.
The doleful suffering, too, which thou shalt see,
Is not the same as was by me described;
New crimes prevail on earth, new punishment
Is gendered by the crime, whate'er it be;
For crimes on earth unpardoned form the seed
Of all the anguish and the terror here.
This is the night of the great universe,
Whose drear and infinite circumference
Surrounds, as with a girdle, all that is
Of substance, color, form, or life, or light.
Dark, and still darker to the outer darkness,
It stretches where no soul hath ever been,
And holds extremes ferocious, frost and fire
Bereft of all their beauty seen elsewhere,
With all degrees and elements of woe.
The residue of chaos lies beyond
All gray and lampless, without form and void.
The light of God, whose smile enkindles all

The suns of all the systems into fire,
Which send their genial beams to all their worlds,
And by reflection on attendant orbs,
That man and bird and beast and plant may live,
Is here all broken, hindered and shut out
By beings ever rebel to his law,
And even the elements resemble them.
Nothing is good where man is bad; this light,
Lurid and ghastly, if it did but shine
Upon an aged hermit bent in prayer,
How it would beautify his silver beard
And caverned solitude! This fire,
Which cheers the dwellers of your earth in winter,
As round the hearth the ruddy faces shine
Of happy children, and, by skill of man,
Is made a servant full of power and beauty,
Becomes the scorpion-lash of fiercest pain
In this dim dungeon; and this gray, weird gleam
But shows what they would hide, and strangely weaves
Spectres of terror to affright and wound."
He paused, and downward slowly then we moved
Through smoke and wailing cries into a place
Dismal and horrid as a slaughter-house.
His words seemed frightful—the reality
Turned speech to nothing but a wasted breath.
There, haggard women sat in pools of blood,
And in each lap a blind abortion lay
Whose eyes were destined never to see light.
With restless care one wretched creature tried
To chafe to life a clay-cold unripe thing;

She turned it o'er and o'er, she breathed hot breath
On its discolored form, as peasants blow
Their blue, swollen fingers on a wintry day,
Then dropped her head and wailed. Another rocked
Her body to and fro, and tried to sing
A lullaby to something in her arms;
Her voice was cracked, her song was but a shriek.
Another, hollow-eyed and ghastly staring,
With some strange lingerings of beauty left,
Held her lean, milkless nipple to a mouth
That will not open, and at intervals
Her once too lovely face grow black with pain.
And there they sit, and must forever sit,
And each must ply her vain task ceaselessly.
They hush, they warm, they hide them in their bosoms,
They wish their withered dugs would spring with milk;
A mother's love has come, alas! too late;
Phantoms of smiling infants crowned with flowers
Hover before their eyes, and on their knees
They look again and find forever—death.
And round about them, in a fiercer doom
Than tongue of man yet mortal may describe,
Howl those who were seducers and conspired,
Against the laws of nature and her God,
To murder life in its pre-natal bed.
Then further on we moved; yet, ere we left,
A shower, as if of withered autumn leaves,
Of staring, spectral men and women fell
From this gay world of ours; from Britain's isle,
Where in one year twelve thousand infants die

By suffocation, drowning, drugs or steel,
A heavy annual tribute to this realm.
And thousands, too, from that great western land
Last born among the nations; woe, alas!
When these most damnable of practices
Brings not the blush of shame upon her cheek!
Her beauteous daughters now do waste away,
The mother heart is gone; lank, pale and weak,
Yet vain and proud, they die before they live.
"These are abortionists," my laureled guide
Said, with a lofty scorn, and turned his head
Away with most unutterable contempt,
And I, all silent, could not speak a word;
Silent for shame that I had lived on earth
And been near men who scattered o'er the land
Schemes and incentives to commit this crime,
And on the untimely harvest fed and smiled!
O, could they see but one of these, I thought,
Then kiss a babe's soft cheek and hear her voice,
Sweeter than any song-bird ever sang,
Say "father," they would die a thousand deaths
Rather than do or help such work of hell!

Not far we move, for 't is a city full,
Where wide disorder reigns. The wavering crowds
Welter and sway with grim unrest to find
Some spot more tolerable for their pain,
As each wretch dreams that where another is
Is easier than his place. Yet, as we moved,
On either side they shrank abashed, and knew

The light from soul redeemed, and gnashed their teeth,
But had no power to hurt, or flee away.
These are a swarm of drunkards on the left,
Who in delirium tremens, all unshriven
And unanointed, rushed before the Judge,
Leaving their naked children to the world,
And their own bestial bodies in the sinks
Of filth and vice to lie in graves unblest.
They would avoid us; yet this one must speak:
"Why should I tell thee all my sufferings?
If thou canst pity me, thou hast no power;
If thou hast power, ah! then thou hast no pity.
Thy lips are moist, thine eyes unseared by fire,
But here I wail, parched by eternal thirst,
And all the bubbling springs I ever saw
Wasting their coolness on insensate stones
And worthless moss, are still before mine eyes.
The blessed showers of rain in which I've been,
And evils thought, now seem worth all your world;
The dew-drops hanging on the idle grass,
Yea, even the muddy pools in rutted roads
In which with red feet I have puddled oft
And jumped for joy, a careless, happy child,
Are priceless and unpurchasable here.
O, worse than fabled Tantalus am I,
He was a fancy—this, reality."

Yon straggling crowds who hang their heads and sigh
Were skeptics and materialists on earth;
They were their own gods there, and dared to judge

The mighty Maker of the universe
As if they were His peers; here each one now
Is his own devil, and torments himself
Bewailing things past hope. With loud pretence
They boasted they were "seekers after truth,"
But not with singleness of heart they sought,
Or surely they had found. Though they were proud,
Yet with a base humility they strove
To drag man to the level of the beast.
The soul, free will, responsibility,
Life, beyond death, in the eternal world,
God and his holy law, were all denied.
Eat, drink, be merry! shut our ears to death,
(Like the fool ostrich, with his head in sand),
Pleasant sensations let us multiply!
And as they multiplied their shallow joys
Death touched them on the throat, and down they dropped.
Listen to this one, speaking to himself:
"O, fearful power! O, most appalling gift!
By man unsought, yet cannot be refused,
Ability to choose the deeps of hell,
Ability to choose the heights of heaven,
Without the choice to cease and be no more!
Thou wretched memory of misused time,
Whose springless winter ends in endless night,
What opiate now shall still thee? O, my heart,
Still beating, and still fed that thou may'st beat,
Break, and befriend thy owner! And thou, soul,
That, like a dew-drop from the fields of God,

Surpassing the lost earth in perfectness,
And in duration the bright Pleiades,
Whose virgin clearness I have stained and marred,
And sold for this inheritance of woe—
Is there no hope for thee?" The echoes said,
From thousand fiendish tongues, "No hope for thee!"

"Hast ever seen a king with sparkling crown
And golden sceptre? If thou hast, look there!
Many of these were emperors, kings or queens,
Princes or presidents, or men in power;
And now, what are they? side by side they groan
With common cutthroats, and the vile obscure.
Society is leveled downwards here,
As you may see by noticing that one
Whose jaws are broad, who moves his head aside."
There lay a mass of foul deformity,
Lewd and disgusting as a swollen reptile,
The bloody deformation's first-born son,
That scathed and wasted England's glorious realm;
And round him wallowed in the fiery pool
Some horrid shapes half woman and half fiend.
That body on which fine apparel hung,
And gold and jewels, now unclean and bare
Lay groveling like a beast; and round that head
Where sainted Edward's diadem once beamed,
A coil of toads by devilish paws were strung,
As if in mockery of his former state.
Like some corrupted, blear-eyed, dozing wretch
That in the gutters of a city lies,

One would have thought that he was dead, until
A restless vulture in his eye was seen
That told of inward lust that raged like fire,
Unquenched forever, like the outward flames.
One with a red line round her neck shrieked out—
"I am thy child, thy wife, thy victim, too,
Thou art my father, husband, murderer?"
Another, with a thin, sarcastic voice,
Cried, "I am here instead of Catharine,
Whose sainted spirit in immortal bliss
Remembers thee no more!" Then, as we turned,
A darkness gathered o'er them like a pall,
And they increased their fearful screams and howls
As if some terrible expected woe
Was then to be inflicted, which my guide
Did not seem willing I should then behold,
But moved a little way and said to me—
"The gloomiest region yet we must explore,
Corruption of the best is always worst.
The mighty oak that throws his branches high,
The misty mountains that lift up their heads
In heaven's own blue, cast shadows deeper far
Than mound or mole-hill, or the stunted shrub.
The man with God-like intellect, when blind
To God's pure law, a skeptic or insane,
'Tis more deplorable to know, than those
Who never knew what 'twas to have a thought.
The highest fall the lowest; Lucifer,
The morning star, that by the eternal throne
Resplendent shone, fell to the deeps of hell.

The wilderness that lies before us now,
Where neither flower, nor bush, nor tree, nor rock
Shall ever rear its head to cool the eye
With tints of green and gold; where murky gray
The ceiling hangs above the dull gray floor,
As if they were reflections of each other—
That is the hell of priests. Mark how they hold
Their hands behind their backs! their tongues are struck,
A kind of twitching palsy spoils their speech,
They never can pronounce the Savior's name,
But yet the deepest blasphemy they mutter.
Their knowledge of divine theology
Helps them to scoff at holiest mysteries
While they believe and shudder in their hearts.
On the soft point of each fore-finger hangs
A small, but horrid snake of leprous white,
With eyes of fire, and nose sunk to the bone,
And in the opposing thumbs their tails are hid.
From these points only have they pain—but pain
Of a new kind, unknown, mysterious,
Not to be understood by mortal man.
Alas! these fingers held the blessed Host
While thousands knelt adoring; gave the Bread,
The body of our Lord, the life of souls,
To millions now in blessedness supreme,
While they in wretchedness supreme are here.
These are the yield of eighteen centuries
Into the devil's barn—a ghostly crew.
No power of absolution now have they,

And if they had they would not absolve each other,
So far are they removed from charity.
Schismatics, heresiarchs, and prowling wolves,
Who crept into the fold of Christ for gain—
Not love—or left it for a baser love,
Like this grim shadow that I force to speak.
  Pale and cadaverous, with bluish lips,
Gray hair, hard-furrowed brow and restless eye,
A lean and miserable one we saw
Walk to and fro, like tiger in a cage.
Silent and sour, he would have let us pass,
But was compelled, I know not how, to tell
His secret life, which tortured him the more.
"At Noyon was I born, in sunny France,
A Frenchman, but without a Frenchman's heart;
Revengeful, restless, gloomy, vigilant;
With talent of high order, well brought out.
As good men saw me when upon the earth,
So now I see myself, but all too late.
My death—no, not my death, would I were dead!
For I am dying still, yet cannot die,
But my dark passage from your smiling world,
Was at Geneva, where they huddled me
Into the ground, almost ere I was stiff.
But Haren, curse him yet, has laid all bare;
The black veil o'er my face, the guarded room,
And hurried funeral were of no avail.
Would that the odor of my sanctity,
Which filled that chamber then, had choked his breath,
Or my despairing groans had struck him dumb!

Yet what care I? some others, too, are here,
And suffer more than I do, with these worms,
That only to anointed fingers cling.
The genial heat of love, the spring of life,
That poets sing of, that I never knew;
Rather the cold lust of the crocodile
That burns like frost, and petrifies the soul.
Would that I now were stone! for in my ears
Forever rings the '*Misericordia!*'
Of Servetus, whom I have burned to death.
And yonder, see! a phantom, famine-clung,
Is fishing drift-wood from the river Rhine,
To warm his starving children and their dam;
That is Castalio, whom I hunted down,
Or else his apparition!" And his eyes
Glared, as in horrid vision he beheld
The men whom he had wronged for claiming that
Which he himself had claimed: the right, mis-named,
Of private judgment upon things divine.
"Now cast thine eyes upon this other's woe!
For of all tortured in this house of doom,
Nothing more dreadful shall thine eyes behold."
Illustrious guide! I cried, enough! enough!
O, lift me to the green and sunny earth.
My faith is fixed; O, let us haste away.
Through the dark catalogue of mortal sin's
Unending punishment, O, lead me not!
But for the heavenly balm that wraps my frame,
But for the steadfast thought that God is just,
Which here I see confirmed so terribly,

But for the secret hope that mercy may,
Not justice, deal with me, I here should sink,
With pity and with terror, into nought.
O, turn our eyes from crime's eternal meed,
And let my heart with human feeling beat,
For man who in God's image lives on earth!
Restore me to the maid I love, whose smile
Will make an earthly paradise for me,
Of that dear cottage where my mother dwelt.
There the sweet streamlet rushes o'er the stones,
And roses bend above the still, deep pools,
To see their beauty; and the speckled trout
Poise their bright forms, as birds do in the air.
The living springs gush through moss-covered rocks,
The rocky cliff, ne'er scaled by mortal foot,
Grey with the clinging lichen, rears on high
Its frowning forehead, crowned by dark green pines,
Whose lengthening shadows in the evening beam,
Veil the rude chapel in a twilight hue.
There the rich clusters of the favored vine,
Purple, or pale, or dark with smoky bloom,
Upon the rustic trellis ripening hang.
In that secluded spot, O, let me spend
The life that God may give, in thanks and praise;
And supplication that this living death,
Dragged through eternity, so far from God's
Most holy light and love, may ne'er be ours!

"Whilst thou art speaking fondly of thy home,
In part thy wish is granted; for, behold,
The last dim glimmer of the infernal gulf

Is passing from our sight; the last faint sound
Of hopeless agony dies on our ears.
Close now thy wearied eyes, and cling to me,
The while in blest transition through vast space,
I bring thee to a realm,"—but here I lost,
With sight and sense, all consciousness of being.
And let me, also, dearest, leave this theme,
So dark and frightful; from the little told,
Some notion of the shuddering horror wide
May be imagined. We are on the earth,
And feel the evening zephyr on our cheeks;
Thy hand is soft and warm—the pulsing life
Throbs gently through thy fingers into mine.
The sun is sinking, and the new-born moon,
Like a fine thread of silver, curved and faint,
Is scarcely noticed in the farewell beam;
The landscape fades, too, like a pleasant dream!

CANTO V.—A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

Who can describe the sun, when from the deep
He springs, his moist locks dropping pearls and gold?
Who can describe the sun when he descends
Into his peaceful crimson-folded tent,
With such an unmoved majesty and power?
Who can describe his glory, when, upon
The key of the bright arch of heaven he shines?
For mortal tongue or pencil—ah! too bright.

What stricken mother, o'er her infant leaning,
Whose mute soul flew an hour before, would make
A poem of her grief? What favored one,
With his chaste, sole-beloved within his arms,
Could weigh his consciousness of happiness,
And count the throbbings of the pulse of joy?

The highest admiration finds no tongue,
And silent is the deepest, keenest grief,
And voiceless is the being all absorbed
In hallowed love: and yet in after time,
The recollection, limping, tries to bring
Back to the heart, that wishes to re-feel
Its highest throbbings, o'er and o'er again,
Even though in fragments, weak, disjointed, dim,
The memory of that which once was known.
And as when children visit the sea-shore,
They load themselves with stones and pearly shells,
But home returning, weary of the weight,
They cast reluctantly a part away;
And as they wearier grow, their treasures leave
Upon the roadside, and e'en what they keep
Have lost the dewy freshness of the wave—
So glimpses of the other world supreme,
And memories of the holy house of God,
When brought to earth, grow dim and fade away.

As when the artist on the landscape gazes,
Where rocks and cataracts, and streams and trees,
And verdant vales, and mountains that aspire,

With peaks of misty amethyst, to touch
The soft blue fire of air, all glowing bright
Beneath the summer sun's resplendent beams—
Then on his earthy pigments, so opaque,
So dull, so few the steps 'twixt light and dark,
He lays his color-palette down and sighs.
So I on human language used on earth,
To tell the splendors of the eternal world.

We entered heaven—or rather be it said,
Heaven flowed round us and through us where we were,
Where'er that was, or deep, or far, or near,
Or high, I know not; space for us was changed,
And changed the whole relationship of things.
As a pale weed, that in some dark vault pines,
When brought to sunlight, droops its head and falls,
I fell upon my face; forgot the world,
Forgot even thee, beloved! and seemed to pass
From death to life, the life of gratitude,
Of wonder, adoration, love, and peace.

O, 'tis not that cold death is there unknown!
It is not that from storms the skies are free;
It is not that oppression's iron hand
Ne'er bows the wretched poor man to the dust;
Nor is it that disorder never comes,
Nor strife, nor darkness, nor division chill
Between once loving hearts; all these at times,
On earth we know not; nor that there the flowers

Forever blossom ; nor that melody,
In harmony supreme flows through all space ;
Nor that sweet peace with noiseless pinion broods
O'er verdant vales, pellucid streams, and seas,
Begemmed with islands where the happy walk ;
Nor that the parent of all beauty—light,
Bathes all things in his mystic three-fold beam ;
For snatches of all these we have on earth—
But, like a chalice filled with golden wine,
Each being, human or angelic, there
Is, from the Fountain of unfading bliss,
Full to the brim !

On earth we see or hear,
And straight feel sad or joyful, we depend
So much upon the outward, false or frail ;
Within the heavenly habitations, each
Carries celestial fire within his breast,
And heaven is to him where'er he be.
Here also still from these our bodies dark
The darkening shadow falls ; not so in heaven,
All shadowless they move or stand or bend,
No dull obstruction or opacity
Distorts or hinders the divine effulgence ;
For, as a multitude of sweetest children
Gathered between us and the central glory,
The brightness streamed through the adoring throng,
As if the space were but transparent air.

Like a long undulating field they moved,
Fairer than budding lilies of the vale,

In such a graceful order, that mine eyes
I could not lift from them—and well for me,
For lo! a mother, newly entering heaven,
In rapture clasped the foremost in her arms,
And knelt in speechless joy; for she had been
A heathen when her baby died, and thought,
When Christian faith had lately filled her soul,
That she should never more behold the one,
The only one that from her bosom fed,
Being unbaptized—and now, her every look
Was thanks to God, and blessings on the hand
That poured in secret on its dying head,
The limpid water through which Christ is seen.
Yet all of these fair innocents were hers,
Much more than ever child on earth can be
To the most loving parent: ah! thought I,
Whoever for *His* sake has childless been
On the bleak earth, will not by that have lost.

My looks were lifted upward by my thought:
But, oh! no mortal nor immortal eye
Can gaze upon that radiance which enshrines
Him who made all things by Almighty Power,
Almighty Wisdom, and Almighty Love!
No function or created instrument
Can look on its Creator and exist.
Only the One begotten of the One,
Only the One proceeding from the Two,
Only the Sole Begetter, Three in One,
Who is before, is now, and ever is!

The angels veil their faces with their wings,
Archangels, seraphim, nor souls redeemed,
Nor sinless Spouse of God herself can pierce
The living splendors that, eternally,
Flow from the Triune—blest forevermore!
The boundless Centre, Who includes for aye,
All space, all centre, all circumference!

Yet, as the birds, in sunshine of our earth,
Catch on their wings the light that makes our clay,
So through the gleaming pinions of the blest,
And through their shining garments streams that light
Which he who feels it knows must come from God.
And even to me it was permitted there,
Within concentric zones of radiance pure,
To feel and be one with eternal truth—
Will, thought and feeling, all in harmony,
At home, at home, within our Father's House!
Resting we seemed forever, and yet moved
In scarlet crimson flame, where light of light
In undulating streams of music flowed,
And angel, cherub, seraph, were on fire,
And all my being burned with one sole love,
The love of the Almighty Father, God.

Wrapped, too, in golden fire, through which the light
In sweet and never-ending beauty flowed,
We saw an altar ot pale purple dye,
The color of the lips of our dead Lord,
As if the living flowers of fairest form

Had grown and twined themselves in wondering love,
Then changed to crystals of the amethyst.
A priest with snowy beard beside it stood,
With angels opal-winged for acolytes,
And swung a smoking censer in his hand,
From which large drops like burning amber fell,
Dissolved, and filled the air with a new joy.
I could not speak, being lost in such delight;
I had no wish to know if sacrifice
Is offered still in heaven as on earth,
Wonder and joy excluding all desire.
And strangest harmonies upon my soul,
As of unnumbered voices all in one,
More ravishing than all the instruments
That ever man has framed, from shepherd's reed
And stringèd tortoise-shell, to organ vast,
Came from the confines of the universe.
Then nearer, more involved and exquisite,
As from the lips of radiant seraphim,
Whose speech is music, ecstacy of love,—
"*O Tu es Sacerdos in eternum!*"
And far away by those in crimson light,
"*Ex utero ante Luciferum*
Genui Te!" And from another choir,
Along the trembling spaces of the deep,
In tone majestic, "*Tecum principium!*"

Whether it was the music or the thought
Which dwelt within the music like a spirit,

And brought eternity within my being.
Unfathomable, ere the star of day,
Piercing the dark, shone on created worlds;
Or if it was the overflowing fragrance
That fell like manna on my raptured heart,
Or the unearthly beauty circling round;
Or if it was the most sweet of love of Christ,
That wrapped me in an atmosphere of bliss,
I know not now, but this my memory tells—
A moment, spent in that exaltedness,
Were cheaply purchased by a thousand years
Dragged out on earth 'mid care and wretchedness,
For pain may be forgot—that vision, never.
We were within an ocean of delight;
My corporeal being seemed not to impede
The music, nor the beauty, nor the love
Which flowed all through me, changing me to them,
As fire pervadeth iron dark and hard!

Within the girdles of another sphere,
Like lazulite on fire, glowing, like blue
Upon a furnace, now mysterious
And pale, now deep, with strams of golden light,
Bright angels, doves of heaven, with azure wings,
Held near their bosoms tongues of living fire,
Which once descended on our twilight earth
And lit upon the lips of humble men,
The burning eloquence of love divine.

O, holy Spirit of our Lord and God!
Who, mindful of man's weakness, uses ever
To his dim sight on earth, things sensible,
That he may comprehend as much of truth
As lead his wayward spirit up to Thee!
The burning bush of God, angels like men,
The Dove, the cloven tongues of fire Thou sendst;
Our blessed Savior, as a mortal man,
Appeared and lived with men, that man might live,
Not with excess of glory cease to be.

Even so, the three-fold spheres of three-fold fire,
Revolving in the One Eternal Light,
Enshrining, permeating, symbolized
The blessèd Trinity in Unity.
And Unity in Trinity appeared
As simple; yet my adoration veiled
The human thought and vain desire to grasp
And carry knowledge where it cannot live.
For, though anointed by my guide with strength,
Sustained by peace, and filled with wondering love,
A swift eclipse at intervals came o'er,
Like a pulsation, and bedimmed spirit,
As when we look on the meridian sun
Darkness instead of brightness fills our eyes.

From such a trance my silent guide awoke me,
And bent my vision upon other themes;
And whether thought, or subject of the thought
Was first, I could not tell, nor cared to know.

They seemed but one, and yet I still remained
A separate and distinct identity,
Having no memory of a time gone by,
Having no forecast of a time to come,
But one eternal present ever there.

Circled about with beings whose blue eyes
Shone with compassion half, and half with joy,
We saw the Virgin Mother—suppliant,
Half turned from us, with such a winning grace
She gazed, radiant with love, upon her son.
Fairer than beaming planets 'round the moon,
Crowned with white lilies some, themselves as pure,
Some with anemone and jessamine,
Some with pale rosebuds, some with passion-flowers,
Some with the purple violets in their hair,
Hyssop and hyacinth and shining leaves,
Fairer than fairest princess of the earth
Upon her bridal morn, each virgin there,
By turns, and yet as if unconsciously,
"*Ave Maria! Gratia plena!*" sings;
And soon, from souls redeemed who suffered well,
Good mothers who have seen their children die,
"*Ave Maria! Gratia plena!*" sings,
As from a harp of many varied strings.

Their azure eyes they lifted in delight,
As if some glorious presence were descending,
And, bending sweetly down, they murmured low,
"*Behold the handmaid of the Lord!*" And there

We saw, in his divine humanity,
Jesus, most beautiful of women born!
Love, love unfathomable, beamed from His eyes.
I felt this pity glide into my heart,
My gratitude welled upward to my lips,
And filled my swimming eyes with liquid joy;
For 'twas my greatest happiness to weep,
As on those blessèd feet and and hands I gazed,
Whose wounds for us like living rubies shine.

O, Love! sole conqueror of sin and death!
O, Strength! O, Beauty inexpressible!
Our mortal air is all inadequate,
For, on the borders of unconsciousness
The being trembles that would speak of Thee
As Thou are known within the courts of heaven!

Fainting, I fell upon my face and prayed
That I forevermore might there remain.
But my calm guide, who knew that I must first
Pass through the gloomy portal, gently moved
My prostrate form away, and said to me—
"Along the margin now of yonder river,
Whose light is in itself, we two will glide,
For on its banks a wond'rous garden lies,
Whose flowers form the crowns of the elect—
Crowns that can never sere or pain the brow.
The stream or lake is an immense ellipse,
And neither mouth nor fountain head is seen;
Yet rivulets of beauty, singing, pour

Themselves into its bosom all along
Its radiant banks at intervals. And see!
As quick as thought, we touch its sparkling shore."

As pebbles on the borders of the sea
Lie strewn in myriads, so do precious stones
Pave the broad fringe with crystals of all hues
And forms, or simple or polygonal,
Of which no lapidary ever dreamed.
The precious opal, like the light of morn,
Blue sapphire and the purple amethyst,
And chrysoberyl with wavy floating light,
And orange sardonyx, and ruby red,
And chrysolite of pale translucent green,
And beryl with its prisms hexagonal,
Jasper and sardius and chrysoprase,
Garnet, or carbuncle, twelve-sided, green,
Deep red, or yellow, or the richest brown;
Emerald, and diamond of the purest fire,
And many more, ne'er seen on this our earth,
Whose names I seemed to know, but know not now,
Lent beauty to each other by their rays,
Reflected and refracted curiously
By rhombus, prism, and polyhedron rare.

"Look!" said my guide, we move across the deep;
The garden is an isle elliptical,
In which white-pinioned angels often walk
And blessed saints to watch the coronals.
When the predestined soul that lives on earth

Acquires a virtue that she will not lose,
The garland grows in beauty; all its buds
Or blossoms, leaves or stems or tendrils fine,
Are emblematic of the virtues gained;
And when the soul escapes from death and time,
The wreath is perfected and grows no more.
As indestructible as heaven itself,
Their beauty never fades, no weight they bear,
And in each flower and leaf internal light,
Crimson or green or golden, mildly shines,
As this one which thou seest upon my head.
No two are formed alike; the kinds of flowers
Are without number, of all forms and dyes,
And in their combinations infinite;
Part of that endless beauty which the soul
Through all eternity cannot exhaust.
And wonderful is this too, you will find,
Each bears resemblance to the character
Of that particular soul for which it grows,
And when complete becomes a changeless gem.
Now stoop a little and but look on this!
See! what a matchless purity and grace
Dwell in this snow-white lily, and the rose
Just blushing into love, so near divine.
The crown is nearly perfect; 'tis for one
Who is a virgin and will—" here he paused;
I looked a moment, and I knew 'twas thine,
And likewise knew—though it disturbed me not,
But rather pleased—that thou art not for me
In that most intimate relationship,

As once we thought. O, that this heart were filled
With such a peace again as then I felt!
For in that sphere of spheres no one can say
"This is not good," or feel that aught is wrong,
Or hesitate to trust the secret grace
That urges gently to the better way.
The dream of former days comes to my mind—
"The heavens are stooping down to take thee from me,
And clothe thee with the garments of the just!"

"O, my loved brother! thus I call thee now,
And I will be thy sister evermore!
I am not startled by these strange, strange words;
The thought has been conceived within me, too—
I know not how—but never could have birth
Upon my lips, till it came first from thine.
His broken sentence let us finish thus:
'Who is a virgin, and will so remain.'
I know thou wilt, for thou hast often said
'Our sacrifice is measure of our love.'
Thus we will lift our love above the earth,
Beyond the reach of fortune, time, or change,
That it may bloom before the throne of God!
Tell me some more, tell me some more of heaven!
And turn thine eyes away; all things grow poor,
And fade, and worthless grow, before my soul,
Whilst thou art speaking!"

"Ah! my promised spouse!
I mean my sister and my only friend!

When gravitating towards myself and thee,
The recollection of the vision fades.
Self blinds the soul, celestial things grow dim;
The ear is not attuned to angel song,
The tongue can never find the fitting word,
When throb the pulses for mere private good.
Morn, noon and eve, a northern summer day
Would be consumed in taking one faint glimpse
Of one small part of that first dwelling place,
And I had scarce begun; another time,
When calmer grown, I will resume my story.
Gazing on thee, my human heart becomes
A kind of battle-ground, where now the strife
Shakes so the resolution of my soul,
Which seemed before so steadfast, that wert thou
To waver in the least, we both should fail.

"I kiss thee, as a nun would kiss a child
Who has a mother of its own. And, see!
Imbedded in this little cross of gold,
The ring, which was to be thy marriage ring;
I had it fashioned thus that it might be
Upon thy gentle bosom night and day;
So may our love be hidden in the Cross,
That thy dear head may wear the beauteous crown!

"Come! lean upon me! I will bring thee home;
'Tis later than we thought, and yonder moon
A broader crescent shows against the west
Than when we parted last. Dost thou perceive

How near her disc the planet Venus shines?
Now they are both one light, and now the star
Of evening, and of lovers, is eclipsed!
In this phenomenon some meaning lies
O'erveiled and hidden; shall we say the moon,
Symbol of change and madness, doth obscure
And quench the genial light of Venus, Love?"

"Nay, Hubert, rather say, to suit us now—
Though 'tis a wonder that we look upon—
The moon the symbol is of chastity,
And that our lesser love, like Venus' fire,
Is hidden 'neath a larger light of love!"

CANTO VI—THE END.

Unfathomable providence of God!
O, light inscrutable, by mortal thought!
Pale as a lily on her modest couch
Lies the dear maid Christina; and those eyes
Which but a little while ago were bright
With health and resolution and sweet hope,
Have now a lustre that is not of earth.
Ah! what hath touched the fountains of her life?
Has her pure sacrifice o'erwhelmed her heart
With sad revulsion? Or does love divine
Flood all her being with its silent tides,
In which the mortal functions lose their power?

The priest has been, and with his holy oil
He has anointed her fair hands and feet;
And prayed that God would spare what He has made
So pure and beautiful, to cheer and lead
Souls to love virtue by her loveliness.
He thinks it is a faintness that will pass,
And stirs her thoughts with pleasant holy words,
Which on her pallid lips produce a smile—
A strange, sweet smile, devoid of mortal fear,
Which seems to say, "Unseen within these walls,
The Reaper-angel stands and waits for me!"
The doctor cannot name her malady,
His art avails not in this exigence,
And though some simple medicine he leaves,
He trusts to Nature's old physician, Time,
Who kills and cures, yet only cures to kill,
As He who guides the atom, and controls
The aggregate of nature is ordaining.
Beside her bed a matron sits and sews,
Singing old ballads full of hapless love,
And pious hymns, and soothing lullabies.
Upon a bracket stands a vase of flowers,
And the sweet odor of the briar-rose
And pungent fragrance of the creeping thyme,
Mixed with the lovely sunlight, fills the room,
And makes it like a little nook of heaven,
But for the prostrate form that slumbers there—
Or seems to slumber, rather. To her ear
A step is on the threshold, and she lifts
At that so well-known sound her heavy lids,

Which but disclose two pools, that, brimming o'er
Their dark-fringed barriers, pour the crystal drops
Profusely down her cheeks. Her outstretched hand
He presses to his lips, and with a voice
Breathing compassion in its low sad tone—
"Why dost thou weep, my sister and my love?
O, that I could relieve thee! that I might
Bear all thy pain, or give my strength to thee!"
She answered faintly, "I feel little pain,
But strange prostration, and I only weep
To think that I may leave thee here alone.
If this is death that steals so softly o'er me,
Stilling this buoyant life just in its bloom,
I never thought it was so sweet to die,
Nor ever thought it was so hard to part.
For who will comfort thee when I'm asleep?
Ah! who will lift thee with some words of cheer,
When thy too ardent spirit sinks depressed,
Or sing the songs and hymns thou lovest to hear?
Yet, if I go where prayers can most avail,
Though all unworthy there to find a place,
They shall for thee arise. O, blessed Lord,
Perhaps, in pity to my weakness, thou
Dost take my soul that I may sin no more!
Mercy! my Savior Jesus!"

Suddenly,
A little bubbling blood between her lips
Just rose and fell a moment, and a sigh
From the spent sources of mysterious life,

Like a slow unseen billow heaved her bosom,
Then faded into silence and deep peace.
He, kneeling there and holding her pale hand,
Could not believe the unexpected truth,
Till from the bed a lovely form of life,
The unencumbered counterpart of that
Which, cold, will soon invade and turn to earth,
Rose like a beauteous vapor of the morning,
And, with another unsubstantial shape,
Lingering a moment o'er the pallid clay,
Vanished together through the air away.

Weep, pilgrim of the earth, so strangely left!
Weep! for thy mortal eyes were made for tears.
Strive not to stop the quickly-falling drops,
Nor stifle suddenly the heavy sigh!
The human heart must bleed, the spirit sink,
And he is ever more or less than man
Who can behold untouched the moveless form,
Soon to be formless, of the one beloved!
The last expression lingering on the lips
Oft pressed in joy, which harsh necessity
Demands must now be hid and seen no more;
The beauteous vase once lighted from within,
The temple where the immortal spirit dwelt,
Left dark, and tenantless, and desolate.

But she will weep no more—unless for joy!
O, happy one, forever now secure
From summer's scorching heat and winter's cold,

And all the thousand sights of misery
Which will not be relieved, yet dim the eyes
With unavailing tears; from stony hearts
That long have ceased to love, or turned to hate,
From change and pain and darkness and decay.
She feels that heaven which thou but late essayed
In feeble words to picture to her sight
The home of beauty, freedom, love and light.

There is a hill with higher hills around,
Some little distance from the sea-girt town,
On which a chapel, built of rough grey stone,
Stands high above a valley, on whose fields
The grain is changing now from green to gold.
A brook, born of unnumbered busy springs,
Has cut the stubborn rocky ridge in twain,
To free itself, and, like a saintly soul,
Seeks ever to attain the lowest place,
That it may reach its boundless home, the sea.
It sings and fertilizes as it flows,
And mirrors all the lovely things of day,
The foliage, quivering 'gainst the sweet blue lining
Of earth's fair canopy, the bright-plumed bird,
The heavy-laden bee, the happy child,
Who cools his feet, and sees a wondrous world
Of boundless wealth within its pebbled bed.
At night the firefly's spark, the glow-worm's gleam,
The milky girdle of the air, and lights
From star and planet, sink into its breast,
As heavenly thoughts come to the pure of heart.

Above the streamlet on the rock's worn brow,
Some gloomy pine trees stand in mourning clad,
Beside a little burial ground which slopes
Gently toward the sun; there is the grave!
The first that e'er was hollowed on that hill:
And in its silent bosom they have laid
All that remains of her, so beautiful,
Except her image in one constant breast.
'T is a lone spot, yet lovely; the wild rose,
Peerless in beauty, blossoms twice a year.
The air is sweet, the murmuring rivulet
Sends from below its soothing lullaby,
And mingles with the odor of the pine.
The sacrifice of everlasting love
Is made within these poor but hallowed walls,
And 'neath these rustic crosses there is rest.

By that secluded spot, a patient man,
Like hermit of the desert, works and prays:
Few are his wishes, and his wants as few;
He drinks the limpid waters from the spring,
That with unwearied bounty gushes forth:
His food, the earth with healthful labor yields.
When he perceives in nature's wondrous life
A hint or symbol of a truth divine,
A correspondence in the things we see
And those we see not, but yet hope to see,
Then has he purest joy: he tastes that food
That he will live on in the life to come.
Far from ambition's dusty road he dwells,

The world well nigh forgot. In tones subdued,
While sitting lonely by his glow-worm lamp,
He sometimes sings the hymns which once her voice
Pierced with a loving and a holy fire,
That trembling upward to the fountain strove.
And on the long, long summer days he comes
And, on the marble cross above her head,
Hangs the white lily and the crimson rose,
That droop and wither ere the day is done;
Which stirs not now the wellsprings of his grief,
Nor mars his peopled solitude of thought;
For he remembers that, in heaven serene,
He saw the garland that now decks her brow,
And never needs renewal; and that thought
Kindles afresh the vision of that glory,
Untold, forever, unimaginable—
Fanning his hope into a deathless flame,
Filling his constant heart with this deep faith—
"True love is purified and crowned by death."

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	
24	1	Port, for point.
32	5	Carelessly, for carefully.
43	5	Thing, for being.
47	3	Buds, for birds.
58	23	Drooping, for working.
88	1	Rivers, for ruins.
92	2	Sunless gorge, for gorge.
143	2	Thou, for those.
196	15	Aught, for ought.
200	7	Speck, for spark.
231	9	Day, for elay.
233	15	Corporal, for corporeal.
233	22	Streams, for strams.

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